



Richard W. McCann

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MEANING
NO OFFENSE



COVARRUBIAS

MEANING NO OFFENSE

being Some of The Life, Adventures
and Opinions of TRADER RIDDELL,
an Old Book Reviewer, in the
Dark Continent of Contemporary
Literature; *including* an Assort-
ment of STRANGE INTERVIEWS
and LITERARY FOLLIES

by
JOHN RIDDELL

Illustrated by COVARRUBIAS



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For



Frank
Crowninshield

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Riddell is a book reviewer on
Vanity Fair

 FOREWORD

THIS is a bumptious book, more full of sheer wango and utter pht! than you are likely to find in a day's march in search of crumpets. These untutored memories of a senile reviewer adventuring amid last year's Best Sellers, recorded with a sarcomic pen in a Lexington Avenue doss-house, what I mean to say, not a scone's throw from Broadway, where was I? In other words, the literary opinions and prejudices of Trader Riddell—who surely in his day has been a veritable whippet for reading, or somebody is a liar—can be best described as vip! Utterly and altogether vip! The mixture of liggish phrasings with sayings so incomparably wog make for a dish that will zigger the appetites of the most ho-hum. I mean to say, the extremely what-what.

But let me suggest a few twitches:

FOREWORD

1. Foreword vii
2. Introduction xiii
3. John Riddell: A Product of His Times 3
4. Bridge of San Thornton Wilder 19
5. Strange Interview 34
6. Through Africa With Lipstick and Camera 42
7. Poems Appraised at Practically Nothing 57
8. Blue-prints for Another American Tragedy 65
9. Corto Y Derecho 73
10. A Stepson of Mother India's Aunt Answers 80
11. Equestrianism for Ladies 90
12. New Ladies' Clubs to Conquer 101
13. The Man Who Knew Lewis 110
14. A Child's View of America 118
15. Hollywood Boy 126
16. The Ultimate Game Book 137
17. Do Fishes Perspire? 141
18. Comparative Marriage 150
19. My Trans-Broadway Hop 158
20. Dead Novelists Are Good Novelists 167

FOREWORD

On second thought, it would appear that in my pardonable enthusiasm I have apparently recommended the entire TABLE OF CONTENTS. How delightfully timp of me! What? I mean, how whoop. I mean to say, taking one thing with another, the book is altogether as briggled reading as I've done in a day's brisk gallop to hounds. What I mean, cricket. Utterly cricket.

If you know what I mean.

JOHN GALSWORTHY RIDDELL

"The Willows"
Woppenshire-cum-Kent
Alwyn, England



MEANING NO OFFENSE,
MA'AM; *the author desires to
make humble apology to any
of the novelists included herein
whose style he may have paro-
died; also to assure their pub-
lishers that he will not allow
himself to be held responsible
for any sales increased thereby.*

INTRODUCTION

by Mrs. Ethel Reader

THIS is an actual book by a real person. So real, in fact, that I have thought it advisable to change several names, including his own. I have also thought it advisable to lend him a false beard and an old suit of clothes, and buy him a one-way ticket to Bolivia.

In his own words: "John Riddell? 'Tis a strange name. It's our custom to pronounce the name two ways. One to rhyme with 'fiddle' or 'diddle,' and the other by stressing the last syllable so as to rhyme with 'smell' or 'what and the hell.' Not that it makes much difference, Ma'am, so long as the name is fictitious, as they say. What is his real name? Aye, well, now, some say he is one feller, some say he is another. Between you and me, Ma'am, for a fact, I'm not quite sure myself. Sometimes I

INTRODUCTION

think he's Barrie; but that's just a hunch. Other times I'm more inclined to think he's really Charley Ross."

When Trader Riddell first swam into my ken (the houses in Johannesburg are all surrounded by kens, or native canals, which are used instead of sidewalks during the hot weather) I was about to settle down to a morning's reading on my *stoep*. With a Kathleen Norris novel and a box of caramels, it being then ten o'clock of a bright Tuesday morning and the dishes not yet washed, I approached the *stoep* full of the possibilities of chapter fourteen, which, provided I could finish it, would give me material enough for the paper on American Literature I was preparing to read before the Johannesburg Tuesday Afternoon Ladies' Bicycle and Whist Club.

On the mat before me stood an old man. He held in his hand a cluster of brand-new Best Sellers, with clean jackets and uncut pages: novels, biographies, travel books and detective stories, plays, verse, and the like.

Regarding me with a mild but, as I now know, an all-seeing eye, he began the difficult

INTRODUCTION

business of selling a book to a person who is reading Kathleen Norris.

The battle was short. I pleaded a library replete with uniform sets of Dickens and Thackeray. I explained that I had to go to so many Literary Teas that I had no time for reading. I maintained that I belonged to both the Book-of-the-Month Club and the Literary Guild. I pointed out that they chose all my books for me.

He only came closer, his outstretched hand all but touching my shoulder, his face an imperishable picture, with its dark blue spectacles and the white beard, longish and narrow, fastened just behind the ears with two loops of black elastic.

"I believe," I faltered, under the spell of those eyes, "*I could* do with a good novel."

I suppose he knew this was coming. As if it had been his cue in a play, he unstrapped his pile of books and off-loaded them at my feet.

"Why, certainly, Ma'am. It is natural to all to desire a good book. A change, let us say, from E. Pettit, or Mrs. Barrington, not to mention Upton Sinclair and the rest of them.

INTRODUCTION

Meaning no offense, Ma'am. I mean no offense to anyone . . .

"Pray don't try to pay me for these books, Ma'am. They're only free reviewing copies. 'Tis a pleasure to be able to give them away.

"By the way, Ma'am . . ." He paused, and then added impulsively, "Now that I have sold you these books, perhaps you would also like me to read them for you. It would save you the trouble of reading them yourself."

It was at that moment that I said to myself, "This man is a godsend. If I can persuade him to read all these books for me, think of the conversations I can have hereafter at the dinner table! Think of being able to say casually, 'Ah, yes . . . of course . . . Bodenheim . . .'"

He spoke with such confidence that I said to him, "You must be a critic."

"When I say that I am acquainted with books, it's not to say I am a critic myself. They're common enough in America as it is, with everyone trying his hand. Meaning no offense, Ma'am. Reviewing has always been good enough for one on *Vanity Fair*. Riddell's my name. John Riddell of *Vanity Fair* . . ."

INTRODUCTION

I bowed. "My name is Mrs. Ethel Reader."

He sighed as if the mention of books had set something moving in his brain, if possible. His eyes, those far-seeing eyes of age, gazed at the pile mildly.

"Aye. A sort of a book reviewer. Ma'am, I could tell you— I've seen—"

He bent over as he spoke, kneeling beside the heap of books and shuffling them in his aged fingers, shaking his head, muttering to himself, chuckling, nodding reminiscently, occasionally wiping his eyes with the back of his fist and whispering, "Poor little Anita Loos!" or "John Erskine! Alas . . ." He had the air of an old wanderer returning to the scenes of his childhood; or, sadder still, of a publisher running through the dusty shelves in his stock-room.

I stood still as a heron, on one leg, while his mind rambled through the past year.

"Literature, Ma'am. Literature—as America has forced her to be, the home of the Best Seller and the Movie Contract. Scarce a high-spot, Ma'am, in the whole broad field of American fiction—nothing but a bright green expanse of

INTRODUCTION

waving bank-notes, and the swish of well-fed Literary Lions, slumbering in clover. Lying still there amid the royalties, and the first American serial rights, and the second American serial rights, and the foreign rights, and the play rights, blinking at the whole pleasant prospect that stretches from here to Hollywood—and nary a bother about Posterity to pry upon their happiness.

“Bound by the rites of Egbo, I am, to be blood brother of cannibals. Look at that thumb. Mencken bit it off, Ma’am, in an argument about Taste. Me? I’ve seen the skulls heaped up in the Algonquin: Weaver and Farrar and Benét and the rest. Blood brother to the cannibal critics, where there are no gods but their gods . . . But I was only a book reviewer . . .

“And I knew Theodore D—, the most important writer in America . . . So they say. So they say. But I never could read his stuff . . .

“God he was, in the Josh House there . . .

“Why, I was only a lad when I first interviewed Eugene O’Neill. I’ve known all the

INTRODUCTION

Best Sellers—Hergesheimer, and Ernest Hemingway, and Sinclair Lewis. And I was present at the fall of the Bridge of San Thornton Wilder. Seventeen, I was—or was it sixteen? I can't remember clear . . .

“Aye, Ma'am, and I have done my share of exploring in my time. Diving under Tropic Seas with William Beebe, and swimming the Panama Canal with Richard Halliburton, and exploring Africa with Mrs. Martin Johnson. Poor Osa! Troubled by that old Camera-Phobia night and day. They say that when a shutter clicks, she shies like a colt . . .

“I can remember when America first began to take up Psychology in a serious way. John B. Watson, Ma'am. Or Dr. Joseph Collins. ‘The Doctor Looks at Biography,’ ‘The Doctor Looks at Love and Life’ . . . aye. Sometimes I have wondered if it isn't about time that the Doctor took a good long look at himself . . . Meaning no offense, Ma'am . . .

“Though 'tis only natural they should fall for such a unique trick as *Behaviorism* in America. They'd never read much Psychology before. What won't any of us do to explore the

INTRODUCTION

Subconscious? We call it Art now, and that's the only difference. Conrad Aiken, for instance. And Sherwood Anderson . . ."

His voice slowed off, as if he had stopped to look at something unpleasant in his own mind. Something that was far away, but not quite far enough.

"Why, Ma'am, you may not believe it, but I can talk Sherwood Anderson:—*New York. Sex. Ankles in the subway, calves on the escalator, knees on a Fifth Avenue bus. Think-loving on Fifth Avenue. 'Special Sale Women's Hosiery, \$2.98.' New York a buxom wench with two large white breasts. Grand Central Terminal and Pennsylvania Station. Feeding the whole nation through two breasts, and 125th Street. Lord Harry, what a kick I ought to get out of New York! All the way back to Chicago . . . Aye . . .*"

He spoke like a parrot, as if he had been reading the same phrases many times.

"Style, Ma'am. A resort for those who have nothing else to offer. Frances Newman . . . meaning no offense, Ma'am, but if God ever made a more utter stylist, he hasn't let me

INTRODUCTION

know about it, thank God. It takes more than a French phrase and exotic perfumes and some inverted sentences to write a novel. . . .

“Take Fannie Hurst, Ma’am, writing with all the restraint of a busted stay. Aye, and even such sensible writers as Elinor Wylie . . . ‘Mr. Prose and Mr. Poetry,’ a curious mixture . . . and Thomas Beer . . .

“Did you know I can speak Thomas Beer, Ma’am?—*Bernard J. Schnitzlich broke his tooth on an olive-pit; and two weeks later, in mauve New York, a slim aviator was to be Charles A. Lindbergh, where ten million people were tangled hair in a drain-pipe, tearing up telephone books like a snowstorm in June, and on Dec. 3, 1876, the cold-water tap in the kitchen sink dripped all night long . . . Aye, it’s a knack. I pick up a style very easy.*”

Sometimes he repeated himself over and over, as the aged will.

“Ma’am, did I mention to you that I’ve seen a white woman goddess of America? Willa C— But best not mention that name. I’ve no wish to betray the tragedy of what might have been a great writer. A handsome style, too. And

INTRODUCTION

there was Edna F—. Goddesses, both of them, in the Josh House . . .

“Why, Ma’am, you may not believe it, but I can talk Aldous Huxley:—*Moral and immoral. Virtuous and wicked. Right and left. Black and white. On the grey steeps of Lake Como the Phœnicians burned Aeiou four times, and on the fourth he turned brunet. The Cro-Magnons never sacked London. Abelard was the secret wife of Frederick Barbarossa. Irrelevancy is a biological necessity. Even the lowest orders of salamanders keep to the left side of the road . . . And so on. Simple as pie.*

“Egbo, Ma’am? I’ve been blood brother to the cannibals. No need to say been. I still am. Once a critic, always a cannibal. Aye, I’ve seen George Jean Nathan chew up four or five tender young writers in an article. And I’ve seen Burton Rascoe swallow as many more writers whole—T. S. Eliot, for instance, and Cabell, and E. E. Cummings. Though strictly speaking I should not call Cummings a writer at all. He is just a phase that other writers go through . . .

“Aye, I’ve lived amongst the cannibals like

INTRODUCTION

a brother. Did I tell you how I lost my thumb? Turned it down too often, Ma'am, reviewing books, and it never grew straight again . . ."

Sometimes he would sift the books affectionately through his fingers and chuckle to himself as he read their titles.

"*Adam and Eve* by John Erskine; *Something About Eve* by Cabell; *Eden* by Murray Sheehan . . . and the odds are still heavy that the original version in Genesis will outlast them all. . . .

"*What Can a Man Believe* by Bruce Barton. Aye, what *can* a man believe by Bruce Barton . . . Meaning no offense, Ma'am . . .

"*Unforbidden Fruit* by Warner Fabian . . . If you must carry it around where you will be seen, Ma'am, I should first wrap it up in a plain brown jacket. . . .

"A sort of a book reviewer, Ma'am. I've known all the Best Sellers—Hendrick Van Loon, and Julian Green, and poor Carl Van Vechten, tagging around after the Ladies of Hollywood, as faithfully as a fallen garter. Did I tell you I made the first Trans-Broadway Hop? I've interviewed H. G. Wells also,

INTRODUCTION

and David Binney Putnam, and Alexander Woollcott . . .

“Why, Ma’am, did you know I could talk Alexander Woollcott?—*When your effervescent correspondent, SKIPPITY HOP, has had his last fit of the vapors and toddled into his anecdotage, SKIPPITY HOP, SKIPPITY HOP, and the tittering group of old meanies gather about the so-styled Round Table of that excellent inn in the Forties, KNIT ONE, PURL ONE, where he used to regale the gaping (right in his face, Master Connolly claims) throng with the steaming gossip and motley bubble, ‘SHAME, SHAME, TELL YOUR BEAU’S NAME,’ of that period which Master Adams suggests might be known henceforth as the Slightly Decay’d, NOW I AM ON MY ROLLER SKATES AND COASTING LIKE SIXTY, which he once collected in a lilac-haunted Memory Book . . . FASTER, FASTER . . . called ‘Going to (LOOK OUT! THE END OF THE PAGE IS DEAD AHEAD) Pieces’ . . . WHEEEEE, HERE I GO . . . BAM! . . . Continued, Ma’am, among the other advertisements.*

“Bound by the rites of Egbo, Ma’am. Blood brother to the cannibals. Critics, all of them. If you doubt what I say, look at this thumb.

INTRODUCTION

An inch shorter than the other one. That came from pressing it against my nose. They taught me to do that. . . .

"Seventeen, I must have been—or was it sixteen? I can't remember clear . . .

"But I must not keep you from your work, Ma'am. I'll be getting along. Good day to you."

I awoke with a start, and seized him by the lapels of his coat.

"Trader Riddell—please. Do I remember hearing you offer to read these books through for me, in order to save me the trouble of reading them myself?"

"Aye, Ma'am . . ."

"And do you think that other people might like to be saved the trouble of reading them, too?"

He nodded.

"Then—can you make it convenient to write out these exciting adventures and interviews and explorations, just as you have been telling them to me? A sort of parody criticism of each book you have brought? And can you make it convenient to come and talk to me, in your

INTRODUCTION

quaint dialect, when you deliver each chapter? We can sit here on the *stoep*, and maybe have a tot of brandy together”—I winked slyly—“and I can take down your cute sayings and place them in italics at the head of each chapter. We may even get another *Trader Horn* out of it, who can tell? All the publishers are looking for one.”

Trader Riddell adjusted his long white beard sagely.

“And, Mr. Riddell—one other little thing—” I glanced nervously behind me, and lowered my voice a trifle. “Can you make it convenient to come when my husband isn’t . . . you know . . .”

The old visitor nodded to show that he understood.

And so it was agreed.

MEANING
NO OFFENSE

JOHN RIDDELL:

A Product of His Times

AYE, Ma'am. 'The Life of John Riddell.' I thought it might be fair interesting first to give them a little of my own biography. Not that I am perfect, Ma'am. No one is perfect today who has a Biography writ about him. That would ruin the sales . . .

"Have you noticed how the Biographies are picking up in America lately? Look at Ludwig; two or three in a week, and still he can't keep them supplied. Boss Tweed, Napoleon, Horatio Alger, Christ, Billy the Kid, Genghis Khan, William Randolph Hearst. . . . The English set a great store on facts, but if a book's to be sold in America, you must keep an eye on the dirt. Idol-walloping, that's what they're after today. Knock him off his pedestal! Bust his halo! Sock him in his reputation! 'The Love-Life of President

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Harding . . . 'Psst, psst, did you know Aubrey Beardsley wore a lavender undershirt? . . .'
' . . . psst, I understand that P. T. Barnum was the illegitimate son of Tolstoi . . .' Aye.

"I've done a fair bit of research among the recent Biographies, Ma'am, to prepare this biography of myself, and maybe first I ought to acknowledge the help I received. For example, I could not have written the first chapter without reading Henry Ward Beecher by Paxton Hibben; nor the second unless I had read Woodrow Wilson by Ray Stannard Baker; nor the third without Bismarck by Emil Ludwig; nor the fourth without George Sand by Marie Jenney Howe; nor the fifth without Boss Tweed by Denis Tilden Lynch; nor the sixth without Genghis Khan by Harold Lamb; nor, finally, the seventh without Lindbergh's We.

"I've had a good bit of adventures in my day, for a fact. A fair share. I've been most everything in my life: a preacher, a president, a chancellor, a novelist, a politician, a khan, and an aviator. There's not many can say as much; though to be sure there's some of them try . . ."

MEANING NO OFFENSE

1. THE PURITAN RIDDELLS

MIDSUMMER, 1813 . . . ¹²

John Riddell lay in swaddling clothes, frowning intently . . . Already the Grand Army had been shattered on the plains of the Dneiper,²⁶ but in Litchfield, Conn., the young ladies of Miss Sally Pierce's Female Academy¹⁸ still tripped under the saucy elms to the flageolet, and a young baby, sucking his toe meditatively, must needs remove it from his mouth when Nurse enters hurriedly with his Imperial Granum²⁷ . . . And in another year the smoke of Washington, burning, will drift down the Potomac . . . ⁶¹

"I lie here day after day," wrote John Riddell that summer to Susan Anthony, "in my crib, attempting to reconcile the facts of existence. Whenever I succeed in getting my toe into my mouth, for example, Nurse brings in my Imperial Granum and I only have to take it out again. Why is this? How can I reconcile Imperial Granum with God? . . . Nurse has just come in and changed me again; that is twice today. How can she understand these things? Change is flux, and flux is existence. . . . Where is God in all this? . . ." ⁹⁴

MEANING NO OFFENSE

From far-off Brooklyn already came the sounds of hammering and sawing; the elders of Plymouth Church,¹²¹ apprised of his coming, were enlarging the chancel and reinforcing the pulpit . . . On the *Tribune*²⁷ the city editor called a young reporter to his side.

"Lyman Riddell," he said, "has a baby son."

Forty years later Horace Greeley⁶⁰ was to remember this.

And in another crib, that pleasant summer afternoon, a brown-eyed baby girl tore open a heavy manilla envelope with her chubby finger. "Dear Lib," she read, "are you doing anything tonight? Suppose I pick you up in my carriage at the usual time, and we'll see if there's really a hell. Bring your bottle. J. R."²³⁷

But old Lyman Riddell¹⁸ was not to be fooled.

"Dearest," the brown-eyed baby girl read later that afternoon, "Father has forbidden my meeting you. Sorry. John." And, below, "P.S. There *is* a hell. My father just gave it to me."⁹⁹

Little Riddell pounded the bars of his crib vainly with his fist. Why? Why? Why? What is hell? Can we believe the doctrines of Cal-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

vin?²⁴ In 1863 we shall abolish slavery. "America *shall* be free."³⁶ If he could only find something to get sore about in the meantime. He wept for rage; and his black Nurse, not understanding, changed him for the third time that day, crooning a snatch of song he would not hear till many years later:

*Riddell, Riddell, is my name,
Riddell till I die.
I never loved Mis' Tilton,
I never told a lie.*⁹⁷

In the *Café de la Régence*²¹⁶ Theodore Tilton was to reach his hand patiently across the chess-board. "Your move, I think."⁸

2. JOHN ENTERS PRINCETON

In September, 1875, a tall, thin, somewhat angular young man, who was distinguished by the fact that he wore a tall silk hat with an orange feather stuck in the band, walked into Princeton village carrying a ministerial-looking black bag that had belonged to his father. There is a popular story extant that, immedi-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

ately on his arrival at college, Johnny Riddell rushed to the library and took out Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. This is absolutely false. The book was in his bag all the time.

On the other hand, the young Riddell lost no time in displaying the qualities of leadership which were destined to distinguish his career in later years as President of the United States of America. While Riddell was Captain of the Princeton football team, such an opportunity arose. It was the outset of the game with Yale, and Riddell, as usual, had won the toss. With the football tucked under his arm he suddenly raised his hand and beckoned the Yale Captain to him.

"Mr. Captain," said Johnny Riddell calmly, and in his attitude could be seen those qualities which were later to distinguish his political career during the most crucial years in American history, "either you will concede this game to us at once, on a 14-0 basis, or I shall walk off the field with the ball"—he paused significantly—"and the referee's whistle."

"Would you consider 9-6?" offered the Yale Captain nervously.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

"You heard my offer," replied young Riddell coldly. "I shall give you three minutes, sir." And he commenced methodically to deflate the bladder of the pigskin.

"But can't we compromise?" begged the Yale man in desperation. "You take the ball, and we keep the referee's whistle?"

Riddell glanced at his watch, folded up the football and tucked it carefully into his wallet. "Mr. Referee," he said in the quiet voice to which some day all Europe would listen with awe, "I must trouble you for your whistle. Princeton has won."

This signal victory was naturally the occasion for considerable rejoicing in Jungle Town; the bells of the chapel rang wildly, and "Riddell's Fourteen Points," as they came to be known, are still discussed in Princeton today.

3. CONTEMPT FOR THE REICHSTAG

"Here in the Landtag, where I am writing to you . . . I am in great difficulties. Already I am Count of Prussia, in charge of his Emperor's land forces . . . but I feel myself constantly handicapped—nay, more, nonplussed—by the fact that I don't speak German. . . . You have no

MEANING NO OFFENSE

idea how this cramps me, *mein freund* (my friend). The only thing I can remember is '*Du bist wie eine Blume*,' and so far I have had little or no opportunity to work this phrase into my military orders. . . . Perhaps you will be so good, therefore, as to slip a German dictionary into the package of clean laundry you are mailing Tuesday . . . I am also out of socks (*schockens*) . . ."

Thus does Herr Riddell write from Berlin to Motley, the friend of his youth; and such are his sentiments during the first months of the reign of "Blood and Iron." Perhaps there is a grim note of fatality in the wordless fears of this Prussian Junker, for in twenty-eight years he is to be overthrown. Perhaps in his next letter to Motley he senses this impending tragedy:

"Tell Fannie . . . that the button is missing again from the *sitzplatz* of my long woolen underclothes. This has happened *ja* several times, and I tell you (*Gott verdammen*) she must in the future more careful be, because it is difficult for me to reach around behind myself every time and sew it on again . . . My love and kisses to Elsa."

Is it any wonder, then, that this man is known already to his associates as "The Iron Chancellor"?

MEANING NO OFFENSE

4. RIDDELL AND CHOPIN

And yet, despite this grim exterior, there was a streak of the most tender romance in Riddell the Man; and this capacity for deep emotion found full though brief expression in his ill-starred *affaire* with Chopin. Although Riddell had never met the object of his affections, he had heard often that Chopin and George Sand were lovers; and his tragic misunderstanding was no doubt due in part to the fact that he thought all along George Sand was a man.

"George Sand or no George Sand," he said passionately, one day, "I shall marry Chopin."

"*C'est impossible*," said his friend Schiller, or Twiller. "Chopin is a man."

"Ha, ha, there's where you're wrong," laughed Riddell gleefully. "There's where everybody gets fooled. She's really a woman. Chopin is just the *nom de plume* she used when she wrote 'The Mill on the Floss.' "

"No, it's the other way round," insisted the friend. "George Sand wrote 'The Mill on the Floss,' and *she's* the woman."

MEANING NO OFFENSE

"Are you *sure*?" asked Riddell dubiously.

"I'm positive," replied Twiller, or Miller.
"We had it in school."

"Well, if *George Sand* is the woman," smiled Riddell philosophically, "then I suppose my love-affair with Chopin is up the creek." Yet it was easy to see that this tragic end to his little romance had cut him deeply; according to some authorities, it was directly responsible for the career of vice and corruption to which he abandoned himself, resulting in the famous "Riddell Ring" which caused so much suffering to New York City the following year.

5. "BLACK FRIDAY"

New York in those days was not the New York of today. In those halcyon times, for example, a stage-line started from the Public Library, circled Bryant Park to avoid the construction which was then under way, turned east on Broadway and ran down James G. Blaine, who was attempting to cross the street. Blaine was later rebuilt on the site of what is now Madison Square Garden; and it was here

MEANING NO OFFENSE

in 1892 that Harry K. Thaw shot Stanford White, who built Grant's Tomb. The Tomb was hurriedly demolished the following year, when it was discovered that Grant hadn't died yet.

At this time, Times Square consisted of a few scattered shanties (later Nedick Orange Stands) and the parking problem was practically nil. The subway had not been heard of, and would not have been believed if it had. Moreover, "Abie's Irish Rose" was still running, and another bad feature was the mosquitoes.

Upon this innocent and credulous city Riddell and his sinister circle descended like a flock of grim vultures, ready to pluck the very heart of the people. The Riddell Ring had its origin on January first, in Riddell's law offices on Duane Street; and among these grim four, Jay Gould, President Grant, James Fisk, Jr., and Boss Riddell, was hatched the famous Santa Claus conspiracy, which resulted in "Black Friday," the Gold Corner, yellow button shoes, and the blizzard of '88.

At that time it was the custom of charitable

MEANING NO OFFENSE

organizations about the city to dress their employees in red coats and white whiskers, representing Santa Claus, and send them out to ring bells and collect coins at strategic points about the city. Armed with this information, Riddell and his three confederates bought four Santa Claus suits, stationed themselves on the four corners of 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue (then the Aquarium), and commenced to ring their bells. In no time they had amassed millions.

Yet, like every good plan, it had its flaw; and Nemesis appeared in the shape of George Jones, editor of the *New York Times* (then the *National Geographic*). Glancing over his newspaper with an eagle eye one morning, this canny editor discovered quite accidentally that the date was February 19th, *almost two months after Christmas*.

His suspicions were aroused at once. Something was amiss. In vain the Riddell Ring offered him five millions of dollars to suppress the telltale date from his newspaper. Jones would not be bribed (not for five million, anyway); the Santa Claus scandal was exposed by

MEANING NO OFFENSE

T. Nast in his famous cartoon "Is there a Santa Claus?"; and the *Times*' relentless campaign spelled for Riddell the beginning of the end.

6. RIDDELL KHAN CONQUERS THE WORLD

In the meantime two problems had to be solved before Riddell Khan could lead his army against the Muhammedan Turks. Already he had conquered Western Asia and Cathay; now his ambitious eye coveted the wealth of Persia and Europe. The world of Islam was before him; yet he hesitated.

The first problem concerned the suit of chain armor which, according to ancient tapestries and paintings on Chinese vases, he was supposed to wear. A pair of chain-mail trousers, Riddell Khan had found, were all very well to stand around in; but when riding horseback they were apt to bunch up under him rather uncomfortably. Upon dismounting, even after a short distance, in fact, he would often resemble a waffle for hours afterward. It was no wonder, therefore, that the brave Mongol hesitated at the thought of riding two thou-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

sand miles thus clad, seated on his swift-footed white charger.

Moreover, there remained the second problem of transporting the horde of a quarter million warriors from Lake Baikal across the Alps into Persia—a problem rendered doubly difficult by the fact that he would have to cross Persia first to *get* to the Alps.

With these problems Riddell Khan dealt in his own way. He called into consultation at once the chieftains and sons of the Khan.

“We shall take the troops by railroad,” said Riddell Khan.

“But that is impossible,” said Riddell Khan’s youngest son, Otto Khan. “Railroads were not invented until 1869.”

“Are you *sure*?” asked Riddell Khan dubiously.

“I’m positive,” replied Otto.

“How did I get there, then?” he asked.

“You made your famous march by horseback,” explained the youngest Khan, “amid starving and deprivations untold, overcoming the terrors of vast deserts, the barriers of mountains and sea, and the ravages of famine

MEANING NO OFFENSE

and pestilence, until you achieved your goal at last. It is a matter of history, sire."

"That's great, Otto," said Riddell Khan, unbuttoning his chain-mail trousers with a sigh of relief. "That saves me quite a lot of wear and tear."

7. NEW YORK'S WELCOME

The return of "Riddy" after this conquest of Europe was an event unprecedented in American history. Amid the frenzied cheering of millions, eager to greet this slim young Lochinvar out of the West, the "Lone Eagle" marched up Broadway from the Battery to Central Park under a veritable June snow-storm of ticker-tape and torn-up telephone books, hailed on all sides as America's Ambassador of the Air, who flew with Faith upon his left, Hope in the cockpit, and Charity chinning herself on the propellers. George M. Cohan composed a song in his honor, "When Riddy Comes Home." Medals, scrolls and keys of the city were presented to him at banquet after banquet, Presidents and senators elbowed to pay him tribute, women flung themselves

MEANING NO OFFENSE

before him, and motion-picture magnates offered him million-dollar contracts.

Yet through all this hysteria "Riddy" remained the same shy, earnest young man he had always been. With a modest smile he declined the fabulous offers, and sought politely to evade the tributes heaped upon him. Despite all these honors, he said, he only wanted to retire quietly with his famous typewriter, "We," and read the crop of new biographies which had accumulated during his long absence.

"Lives of great men oft remind us," said John Riddell plaintively, "we can make our life sublime—provided we write it ourself."

And so he did.

THE BRIDGE OF SAN THORNTON WILDER

AYE, Ma'am. I remember it as if it were but yesterday. A lamentable accident, sure—all five of them suddenly spinning down into the gulf of oblivion, and not so much left for Posterity as a single book they had written. All I could discover later was a page here and a sentence there, maybe a few scattered phrases and thoughts—there was the binding of A President Is Born, by Fannie Hurst, I remember, and several pages of E. Barrington's Glorious Apollo, and I did find part of the jacket of Shanty Irish. That would be by Jim Tully, I suppose. Aye, and I mind I also turned over a page without quotation marks, so that I have thought sometimes it might have been Carl Van Vechten's Spider Boy. But of George Jean Nathan there was nothing left but a slight sneer. Oh, it would fair break your heart to see.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

“How did it happen? I don’t know, Ma’am. Some say that Gene Tunney had crossed the bridge recently with several volumes of Shakespeare, to join Mr. Wilder for their walking tour, and his extra weight had weakened it a bit. I’m not saying. I can only tell you just how it all happened . . .”

PART ONE: PERHAPS AN ACCIDENT

ON Friday noon, May the twentieth, 1928, the finest bridge in Modern Literature broke and precipitated five travelers into the gulf below. This bridge was on a very important highway, but only a few best-sellers had ever passed over it. Most of the travelers, laden with their numerous editions and their movie contracts and their lecture tours, had been content to go quietly down hundreds of feet below and pass one by one out of sight; but of the particular five of which we are speaking not one, not even Doña Fanñie nor little E., not George Jean Esteban nor Don Vechten, not even old Uncle Tullio, had been content to descend with the other baggage rather than attempt to cross the famous bridge of San Thornton Wilder. Mr.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Wilder himself had crossed it successfully not six months before, and now rested comfortably on the other side in the little shrine that bears his name; and there was no reason that they could see why they should not follow him. It was in this way that the accident which we know befell them.

There was a great service in the Cathedral. The works of the victims were approximately collected, and approximately separated from one another, and there was a great reaction against Art (at least with a capital A) in the beautiful city of New York. Authors returned phrases and sentences they had stolen from the classics, and resolved never again to attempt the pursuit of *belles lettres*. Writers wandered about in a trance-like state, writing; they had the hallucination of seeing themselves falling into the same gulf.

Everyone was very deeply impressed, but only one person did anything about it, and that was Brother Riddell. By an odd series of coincidences, this little Critic from North Wales happened to be in New York, converting the Philistines, and he happened to witness

the accident. Any other Critic might have said to himself with secret joy, "Five less books to review . . . !" But it was another thought that visited Brother Riddell: "Why did this happen to those five? Why, among the whole crowd of present writers, were these five particularly chosen to drop out of sight? Why not lose the whole bunch of them?" And so on that instant Brother Riddell made the resolve to inquire into the secret Ambitions of these five persons, that moment falling into oblivion like gesticulating ants, and to surprise the reason of their taking off.

The result of all this diligence was the present book, which, as we shall see later, was publicly roasted on a beautiful morning in the great square. Yet for all his diligence Brother Riddell never could decide the real reason for Doña Fanñie's fall; nor for Uncle Tullio's, nor George Jean Esteban's, nor even little E.'s, nor Don Vechten's. For some say that these five had completed their work and were ready to be forgotten anyway, and some say, on the contrary, that it is what always happens when a Best Seller tries to cross the narrow bridge

MEANING NO OFFENSE

from Prosperity to Posterity, and to become a Work of Art.

PART TWO: THE MARQUESA DE LUMMOX

Doña Fannie could have told you more good things about herself in a page of advertising copy than Brother Riddell could discover in years of research. But the Marquesa de Lum-mox has erred in one direction almost as much as Brother Riddell did in another: she has tried to invest herself with a host of graces, beauty, pace, meaning, which she did not possess; whereas all knowledge of this remarkable woman must proceed from her own published novels.

She was married to her Public while she was still in her tender thirties, and soon the lists of the best sellers fairly teemed with her successes. Still she was not satisfied; and when an exquisite Purpose was suddenly born to her, she fastened upon that child an idolatrous love. But her Purpose would have none of her. She soon began to criticize her mother's speech, her grammar, even her plots, and presently regard her with an astonishment and repulsion.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

The knowledge that she would never be loved in return by her Purpose acted upon Doña Fanñie like salts upon a goose. In desperation she resorted to the flamboyant prose of her novels. She adopted a style, in the faint hope her daughter might murmur: "My mother is charming." She wrote sentences for paragraphs, and words for sentences. She invented the adjective "fastidious." She insinuated herself into the Round Table of those who were celebrated for their conversation, and brought home their jewels of wit. At length, having completed her latest and most Artistic novel, she set out with it under her arm to attract the attention, perhaps the admiration, of her cherished Purpose.

Moreover she took as her companion in this journey an orphan known as little E., who wrote best-sellers about Napoleon and Lord Byron and the Exquisite Perdita, and who was prepossessed with the idea of Art herself. She chose little E. because she was the only one who could show Doña Fanñie a thing or two in Fine Writing. It was hard, indeed, to tell which of them was the more Artistic, as they

MEANING NO OFFENSE

set out for Posterity together, clad in their flowing purple sentences, their plots knotted tightly about their waists and their fingers glittering with borrowed gems, and approached the narrow bridge of San Thornton Wilder.

Of course, that is the trouble with this kind of plot. As soon as I said that they were approaching the bridge of San Thornton Wilder, you knew perfectly well what was going to happen.

And sure enough, it happened.

PART THREE: GEORGE JEAN ESTEBAN

One day twin boys were discovered in the foundlings' basket before the door of the Convent of Santa Borzoi Alfred Samuel de las Blanches. Names were applied to them almost before the arrival of the wet-nurse, and indeed names have been applied to them with considerable vigor ever since. There was no way of knowing who their parents were, but local gossip, noticing as the boys grew older how aloof they held themselves and how smart and

MEANING NO OFFENSE

cynical they were, declared them to be Germanic and laid them in turn at all sorts of European doorways. As they grew up they gradually assumed the profession of the scribe, and made a fair living condemning plays, criticizing books, and publishing a monthly magazine called *The Smart Set*, wherein they printed advertisements of the merchants and achieved a reputation of sorts by refusing to approve of anything.

From the years when they first learned to speak, they invented a language for themselves, one that no one else could understand. This language was a curious mixture of old Teutonic phrases and 1890 slang words, such as *sitzplatz* and *flapdoodle* and *weltschmerz*, and it was the symbol of their profound identity with one another. No word is adequate to describe the tacit oneness of these brothers. There existed between them an admiration of one another so terrible that they could not recognize anyone else as their intellectual equal. Other people were stupid and queer and not quite bright. All the world was out of step except one's brother.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

But at last the first shadow fell across this unity, and the shadow was cast by a mysterious lady in green. They had returned to the city and resumed the criticism of books and the theatre when the incident occurred of which we are speaking. It was almost midnight. George Jean Esteban had gone to bed, and lay gazing out from beneath the blankets at the candle by which his brother was still working. There was suddenly a light tap at the door, and H. L. Manuel opened to admit a visitor in a conspicuous jade-colored jacket.

She said hurriedly: "Quick, paper and ink. You are H. L. Manuel, yes? You write about letters for people, do you not? I want you to write about letters for me, please."

"Yes, señora. You can trust me to do anything for you—anything."

"Do you swear by everything holy?"

"There is nothing holy to me, señora. I will do my best."

"There is your reward." She showed him his name, printed in very large letters: "H. L. Manuel, Editor of the *Mercury*," and then

MEANING NO OFFENSE

gathering her green jacket about her again, she left the room. Manuel put his hands over his ears, rested his elbows on his knees, and stared at his name fascinated. He became aware that Esteban was preparing to leave.

"Come back, you *dummkopf*." He was talking in their secret language. "*Was ist los mit dir, Esteban?*"

George Jean Esteban stood in the dark of the open door. In the unnatural voice in which we make the greatest declarations of our lives, he muttered, "I'm in your way," and turned to go.

Manuel leaped up and grasped his arm. "Come back here, Esteban, you fool. We shall be editors of the *Mercury* together."

Esteban came back and went to bed, and the matter was not mentioned again for many months. At the end of that time, for some reason or other, Manuel's name alone remained. George Jean Esteban packed his own ideas in a very small bag and set out by himself on the road to Posterity; and it was in this manner that he approached the bridge of San Thornton Wilder.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Look out, Esteban. . . .

Heigh ho! Too late.

PART FOUR: UNCLE TULLIO

In one of her broadsides (the XXIXth) the Abbess of Santa Borzoi tried to describe the impression that Uncle Tullio "*our Tramp Poet*" made upon her: "*Where have I seen that curious gesture with which he arrests the attention of a passing editor or publisher's nark and whispers, his lips laid against his victim's ear? He knows all the gossip of Our Ladies of Los Angeles, and I doubt whether the whole Pacific could wash him clean again. But what divine slander he speaks, and how little he says in it. That is what one gets by hanging around the studios and hearing only the conversation of Hollywood.*"

You should know first that Uncle Tullio was the handmaiden of Art. He was also her errand-boy, her confidant, her severest critic; rumor added, her lover.

Uncle Tullio came of a long line of hoboes, illegitimately. At an early age he ran away to New York and wrote his autobiography. He possessed the six attributes of a biographer—a

MEANING NO OFFENSE

memory for anecdotes; the gift of crude epigram; inexhaustible invention; bad grammar; the talent for falling into conversation with strangers; and that freedom from conscience that springs from contempt for friends. For a time he rode the rails; he traveled with a circus; he cooked, and mixed punches, sometimes with Jack Dempsey; he became a bum, and so drifted naturally to Hollywood. Here he hung about the backstairs of Los Angeles and whispered information into travelers' ears. He wrote biographies at so much a biography. As he approached maturity Uncle Tullio began to see that his life had three ambitions. In the first place he wanted to know the best people. In the second place, he wanted to be always near beautiful women, and to be allowed, like a friendly and slightly foolish dog, to come and go in their rooms and write about them for the Fan magazines. In the third place he longed to become an Artist. It was this third ambition, as we shall presently discover, that led to his downfall.

When Uncle Tullio discovered La Cinema, he immediately attached himself to her. Here

MEANING NO OFFENSE

at last was someone who was less intelligent than himself, someone who might consider him a great Artist. Here he could be crude, and virile, and daring. But La Cinema had decided to become a lady; and the first attributes of a lady were to get rid of her disreputable associates. In the earlier stages of her progress she had intimated to Uncle Tullio that he was not to be seen with her in public; finally she dismissed him altogether. Tearfully he bade her farewell in her million-dollar early Spanish villa in the hills.

"I shall tell Art on you," he began. "I shall go to Posterity without you."

"Mother of God," she cried impatiently, "when shall I be rid of this dreadful person? Go. Stay away from me. And take my little Carl away with you!"

"Who is Carl, Milady?"

"He is that odd little boy who is also hanging around here, writing about me. His real name is Don Vechten, and he is the plague of my existence. You will find him at the Hotel Ambassador (*adv.*). Go to Art."

The next day Uncle Tullio and little Carl

MEANING NO OFFENSE

set out together, with their books on Hollywood packed under their arms. They were both bound for Posterity and the Higher Things; but Don Vechten was often given to convulsions, especially in print, and consequently their progress was slow. As they reached the bridge of San Thornton Wilder, they set foot simultaneously on the passageway.

Oooops. . . .

Zowie! ! !

PART FIVE: PERHAPS AN INTENTION

I shall spare you Brother Riddell's generalizations. They are always with us. His book being done was promptly declared heretical, and it was ordered to be publicly roasted, along with its author. As he was being led from his cell, strange thoughts passed through his mind. "Even now," he thought, "almost no one remembers George Jean Esteban and Doña Fannie and Uncle Tullio and Don Vechten and little E. but myself. And when I die these five, and perhaps many others, will be entirely for-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

gotten. All these shall perish with me. It is the least I can do for Literature.”

And so he called twice upon San Thornton Wilder, and leaning upon a little flame he smiled and died.

STRANGE INTERVIEW

HOW do you like it, Ma'am? Writing is a bit of a furore with me. I suppose it comes from reading so many books. Self-defense, you might say.

"I thought I would tell them this time about the Strange Interview I had with Eugene O'Neill. The Gloomy Gene, they call him. Did you see his play Strange Interlude in New York? Nine acts it was, to a decision. They do say that Abie's Irish Rose ran a little longer, but of course Abie's Irish Rose wasn't all on the same night.

"Aye, Ma'am, you never can tell what O'Neill is planning next. It's the unexpected that makes him so interesting. That was why I was concerned to hear his plan for a Century Play, which he has described to me in this interview. That ought to be well worth the seeing. There is only one improvement I could think of, for a fact, and that would be an O'Neill play in which the



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MEANING NO OFFENSE

characters do not speak at all. Instead, the audience all stays home and thinks. . . .

"Meaning no offense, Ma'am . . ."

CHARACTERS

MR. O'NEILL. . . . *By himself (he prefers to be).*

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE. . . . *John Riddell*

SCENE: *The library of MR. O'NEILL'S home in a small, suppressed town in New England.*

The room, like life itself, is all bologney; and apparently the sole occupant is aware of this. It is perfectly obvious, from a glance at the furniture, that it is the room of a man who has discovered that Reality is only Flux, and things are seldom, things seeming what they are, what they seem, The very tables and chairs and draperies make no pretense about being genuine: The rich Oriental tapestries by the window still display their price-tags, "\$1.60 a Yard," and an antique Louis Quatorze chair is marked plainly: "Made in Grand Rapids—the fools!" The wall is lined with shelf after shelf of leather-bound volumes, against which leans a conspicuous

MEANING NO OFFENSE

sign: "I may be a Book Case in the daytime, but at night I'm a Folding Bed." There is a Grandfather's Clock in the corner. It is filled with umbrellas.

A light zephyr rustles the imitation lace curtains, filling the dismal room with sunshine and the scent of apple-blossoms as it whispers softly: "I bring you Spring! Gentle Spring! Gentle Spring, my grandmother's left foot, I bring you a nasty head-cold if you listen to me and change to your light underclothes. Gentle Spring, I'm bringing you? Ha, ha, ho ho ho! Oooh, my operation!"

The window-seat is covered with All-Story Magazines, which contain nothing but advertisements. On the sill stands a large aquarium, in which a lone fish swims in languid circles, bearing a sign about his gills: "I am a rare Japanese fan-tail, yes, I am, and if I am worth the ten dollars they paid for me, then that newt over there is the Czar of all the Russias." A pathetic little snail clings motionless to the side of the glass, labeled: "As a matter of fact, the snail

MEANING NO OFFENSE

has been dead two months. I'm only a pebble."

MR. O'NEILL *lays down his pencil. The telephone is ringing.*

"Ting-ingggggggg!" shrills the telephone.

"Wrong number."

MR. O'NEILL *picks up his pencil again, and resumes his writing.*

MR. O'NEILL (*drearily*): . . . seventeen . . . twenty . . . twenty-three, four, five . . . thirty . . . thirty-six. Fourteen more to go, and I'm half through . . . Fourteen more what?

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE: Fourteen more acts. You ought to know that as well as I do. Here I am swimming around in the stream of your subconscious, without water-wings, and I know more about what you're doing than you do yourself. For instance, right now you're writing.

MR. O'NEILL (*dropping his pencil guiltily*): No, I'm not.

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE: Well, you *were*. You can't fool me. I o.k. every idea that comes to you, before you have it. For

MEANING NO OFFENSE

instance, right now you're going to ask me what you're writing. Go ahead, ask me.

MR. O'NEILL: What am I writing?

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE: You're writing a Century Play.

MR. O'NEILL (*puzzled*): And why do I call it a Century Play?

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE: Don't you remember? Why, Mr. O'Neill! How you and I were sitting here at the desk just like this . . . it was only yesterday . . . and Nina was playing with a eugenic baby she had just had . . . a Eugenic O'Neill Baby, there's a honey . . . little Subconscious has an idea himself once in a while . . . and poor old Charlie was over in the corner playing by himself . . . and you said to me, "I'm writing a Century Play!" And I thought to myself, "I bet he calls it a Century Play because there are going to be a Hundred Acts, and each Act will take a year." And I was right . . . A hundred years . . . I wish I had a shot of gin.

[MR. O'NEILL *pours himself a drink from a bottle labeled "Gordon Gin (Gordon Gin, my eye!)"*]

MEANING NO OFFENSE

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE (*smacking its lips as it floats by*): Even if I get it second hand, it bucks me up a lot . . . Whoops! . . . What funny things are beginning to float past me now, in the dim and troubled stream of Mr. O'Neill's subconscious . . . Funny lavender things, with horns . . . Why, they're thoughts . . . I'll be a son-of-a-gun, they're thoughts of *me* . . . Come here, little thought, come to Papa . . . let's see what you've got to say about me . . . Oh, is that so! Oh, he does, eh! Well, let him shut *his* mouth, if he's sick of hearing me talk. Let him go take a running leap at the moon, if he feels that way. Tell him he talks too much himself, the big . . .

MR. O'NEILL: I heard that.

[*He pours himself another drink of Gin.*]

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE (*gulping*): Oh, he's not such a bad guy at that. He's a pretty good playwright.

MR. O'NEILL (*pouring another glass of Gin*): He's the best playwright in America.

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE (*gulping*): He's the best playwright in America with one hand tied behind his back.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

MR. O'NEILL: He's the best playwright in America with *both* hands tied behind his back.

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE: Good old Eugene.

MR. O'NEILL: Good old Eugene.

[*He pours himself another drink of Gin.*]

MR. O'NEILL: By the way—one thing that's been sort of worrying me—about this Century Play of mine. If it runs a hundred years, how am I going to find any actors to play in it?

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE: Oh, but this play is going to be a great improvement on all your other plays. This play is going to do away with actors entirely. In fact, you're going to read the whole play yourself.

MR. O'NEILL (*still puzzled*): But where am I going to find my audience?

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE: That's another improvement. You're going to do away with the audience, too. They never understand, anyway.

MR. O'NEILL: There's one thing still worries me.

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE (*sleepily*): What is it, Gene?

MEANING NO OFFENSE

MR. O'NEILL (*speaking with difficulty*): If I haven't got any actors . . . and I haven't got any audience . . . then what have I left . . . ?

MR. O'NEILL'S INNER VOICE: Eugene! (*It lowers itself confidentially*) We always have each other . . .

[*"Treeee-eeee-eeee!" shrills the happy dickey-bird in his gilded cage by the window. "Tweet, tweet, tweet! Boy, O boy, I only wish the lousy bum who dyed me yellow and sold me for a canary had to get up on this perch every morning and sing soprano. Cheerilie, cheerilie, cheerilie—cripes! I feel like a nance."*]

[MR. O'NEILL *pours himself another drink of Gin.*]

THROUGH AFRICA WITH LIPSTICK AND CAMERA

*A*YE, Ma'am. *I thought maybe it was about time for a chapter on Exploring. Exploring is quite the rage, nowadays. Everybody going to Africa, or South America, or the South Pole, until you are as apt to run into your next-door neighbor at a water-hole in Samoliland or on a Sumatra game-trail as you are at the annual Elks' Banquet in Hostetter Hall . . .*

"And they make Exploring pay, these days, for a fact, what with testimonials they write for the cigarettes and coffee and mattresses and facial creams they use on safari. 'Osa and I always smoke a Bounce-O Mattress blindfolded at our little camp on Lake Paradise . . .' Aye! If all the things which the Martin Johnsons have endorsed were piled into Africa, Ma'am, there'd be no room left for the Martin Johnsons. Which



MEANING NO OFFENSE

might not be a bad idea, at that. Meaning no offense, of course.

“Aye, take along your wife, that’s the cry to-day. Woman’s place is on safari. Modern exploring has become a family affair, what with Osa Johnson, and Mrs. Douglas Burden—a photograph free with every lizard—and Mrs. Zane Grey, and the rest of them. Have you ever seen a rhinoceros which Martin shot, for example, but Osa was sitting on its head when the picture was taken, smiling modestly into the lens? Well, well, a little feminine appeal don’t hurt the rotogravure sales none . . .

“So for that reason, what with Osa and the rest of them all doing it, I thought it might be best for this chapter if I persuaded my own wife, Zaza Riddell, to write it instead of myself. Something in the style, say, of the flock of articles Osa herself has been turning out describing the various cosmetics and facial creams which she uses during her jungle trips with her husband. How I Kept My Beauty on Safari . . . You know the sort of thing. Consequently in the ensuing article, Ma’am, Zaza will show how she earned the reputation of being the most beautiful

MEANING NO OFFENSE

white woman at Lake Zion, which she also had the distinction of being the only white woman ever to visit."

"ZAZA, you haven't changed a bit!"

My girl friend gathered me into her arms and planted a good big kiss on my cheek, then held me out at arm's length and examined me again. This was the first time she had seen me since my four years' isolation with my husband, photographing big game on the shores of Lake Zion, in British East Africa—four of the happiest years of my life. I knew just what she was going to say.

"This is the first time I have seen you since your four years' isolation with your husband, photographing big game on the shores of Lake Zion in British East Africa," she said, "four of the happiest years of your life. And yet in your pictures you show no signs of the perils and hardships you have undergone. Alongside this rhinoceros, in fact, you are positively beautiful. Tell me, Zaza, how do you ever do it?"

I smiled. Her request was a common one. Ever since John first asked me to go along

MEANING NO OFFENSE

with him on a camera-expedition into the unknown jungles, in order to supply a little Human Interest in his pictures for the roto-gravure editors, I have constantly amazed my friends by my ability to appear beautiful under the most trying circumstances. I have posed on slain animals from which the average woman would shrink; but never have I lost that certain elusive feminine appeal so indispensable to the modern Nature-Picture. During my career I have had my photograph taken sitting on the heads of 1267 dead rhinoceri, 269 annihilated lions, 412 slaughtered tigers, and any number of deceased ibex and gnus. I have coiled inside approximately 500 slain elephants' ears. My French heel has been planted in the eyes of between 60 and 70 punctured hartebeests. Yet in all these pictures I have never failed to register that same wide, steady shark-smile. Small wonder, then, that people ask me again and again, "How *do* you do it?"

When I set out with my husband for Africa, my friends all thought I was mad. "Africa!" they said. To be sure, I do not deny that there are terrific dangers to be faced; but after one

or two experiences one soon learns to be prepared for any emergency. Never shall I forget the harrowing incident which occurred to me on our first trek to beautiful Lake Zion, the jungle paradise where John and I have made our home. Naturally I was somewhat nervous; and in making my toilette I neglected to take the proper precautions. As we pushed through the jungle, there arose suddenly a terrific crashing in the bushes; and without further warning a party of savage cannibals burst upon us, decked in all their war paint. You can imagine my mortification when I discovered that I didn't have so much as a dab of rouge on my cheeks. I was never so embarrassed in all my life.

This incident, however, taught me my lesson; and since then—and here comes my little secret!—I have never neglected to equip myself with a complete vanity outfit, which I carry with me in the jungle at all times. I am never caught in the woods any more without a well-stocked compact slung over my shoulder, filled with powder, and my trusty lipstick swinging in its holster at my side. By dint of

MEANING NO OFFENSE

daily practice before my mirror, I have also developed an uncanny aim with my eyebrow pencil. These are precautions which every lady explorer should take; and more than once this ounce of prevention has avoided serious and perhaps fatal consequences.

One day, while searching through the jungle for some dead animals which John could photograph that afternoon, a blood-curdling snort sounded in my ear; and the next moment a bull rhinoceros charged me in a frenzy of rage. I had barely time to whip out my lipstick, level it to my lips, and give the last finishing touches to my expression, as John raised his camera and shot us both in the nick of time. The very thought of the horrible picture I might have presented in the rotogravure sections, had not my lipstick been handy, haunted me for weeks afterward.

Needless to say, the technique of posing with the jungle animals is not one which can be mastered in a day; and years of experience have taught me that the strictest etiquette in dress and deportment is essential to good results. Perhaps a hint or two at this point from

my own wealth of experience will prove of value to future explorers' wives.

In the first place, the lady should select only those animals to which she can adapt herself with ease and grace. If madame, for example, is given to stoutness, she should scrupulously avoid posing on the head of a hippopotamus, as it is inclined to accentuate her figure. The gazelle, on the other hand, offers a pleasing contrast for the lady with thick ankles. Personally I usually dislike being photographed with a giraffe, since it always shows up my own freckles.

The choice of costume to adopt when sitting on the head of a deceased animal is equally important. I have found on the whole that a flowered organdie or some bright-patterned crêpe de Chine goes best with a spotted animal, like a leopard. On the other hand, a striped French serge is more satisfactory for zebras, though care should be taken to have the stripes of the material run the same way as those of the zebra. With boa-constrictors I usually select a low-cut evening dress of jet, sheer stockings, and a bunch of orchids at the waist.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

For coiling inside elephants' ears or peeking slyly between the horns of a rhinoceros, on the other hand, I wear a smart hunting suit of khaki, with perhaps just a touch of lace at the throat.

The arrangement of the hair on *safari* depends more or less upon the individual tastes of the exploress. Personally I have always drawn my locks back loosely into a knot, because I feel that this style expresses in its flowing curves the lissome sweep of the jungle; while the silvery part in the center suggests the jungle trail in moonlight (to me, anyway). Others may feel that in a stylish bob they will echo more accurately the spirit of the cocoanut-palms.

As with the dress, too much care likewise cannot be shown in the selection of the proper attitude and facial expression to adopt when sitting on a corpse. I always make it my mission to endeavor to express somehow the *feel* of the dead beast, and echo in my mood his late character. (For I think that animals have character, just like humans.) For example, when I sit on the head of a hippopotamus, I

MEANING NO OFFENSE

am always a trifle pensive and sad; whereas when I sit on a leopard's head I lower my eyes and peer seductively from beneath the lashes. I prefer to smile broadly whenever seated on a crocodile's head, as his huge teeth make my own seem considerably smaller; in fact, John says that my mouth is a veritable Cupid's bow in comparison. My favorite position on an elephant's head is just behind the left ear, peering coyly over the tip. I seldom sit on a rhinoceros' head, owing to the painfully inconvenient location of his horns. Gnus, on the other hand, I simply straddle.

Inasmuch as all the packing on *safari* must be done on the broad backs of native coolies, the lady explorer must be prepared to face a little hardship and inconvenience on her travels, and learn to content herself with the barest necessities. On our last voyage to Lake Zion, for example, John and I brought only those articles which we could not possibly do without. Of our modest train of a hundred coolies, the first five or ten carried trunks on their backs containing my evening-wraps, slippers and cloaks. The next dozen brought

MEANING NO OFFENSE

a few little changes for early afternoon wear, and some simple morning frocks; the succeeding four or five staggered under my array of chemises, negligees, stockings and other personal effects; the next squad carried my shoes and slippers; the next twelve my hats; while the succeeding forty-odd coolies carried such indispensable articles of my toilet as cosmetics, facial creams, powders, rouge, and some framed photographs of myself to decorate my boudoir. The last coolie brought up the rear with my bath salts and John's suit-case.

Our first act upon our arrival at Lake Zion was to set up our little camp. We had originally intended to construct a more or less permanent encampment in which we could be really comfortable; but inasmuch as we planned to be on the trail most of the time, we finally decided to content ourselves with a rough-and-ready lean-to of twenty-seven rooms and six baths. This homely little shack John and I constructed with our own hands, out of some walls, ceilings, a pair of stairs and a roof that our natives had brought over the Kaisoot jungle from Nairobi. Articles of furni-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

ture, like the bathtub and the kitchen stove, I fashioned myself out of a pair of old spools and some colored worsted.

Naturally, in the course of our hunts around our jungle paradise, we take every precaution to safeguard ourselves against undue danger. As soon as a rhino is sighted, for example, John and I immediately climb a tall tree and send the natives ahead to catch the beast and tie it up with a stout rope. When they have dragged it back, trussed it securely and fastened it to a near-by stump, we then pump bullets into it steadily for half an hour from our 500-bore express rifles, before we venture down from the tree in which we have stationed ourselves. We next throw heavy rocks at it from a safe distance, spray it with machine-gun fire, and finally gallop around and around it on horseback, yipping and shooting it full of arrows. At last we send one of the natives up to prod it with a long pole and see whether it still quivers.

Once we have made sure in this manner that the creature is actually dead, John unties the

MEANING NO OFFENSE

ropes and props the carcass against a tree in a life-like posture, while I don my snappy riding pants, add a last dab of powder to my nose, and squat between "Old Rhino's" paws, holding my little twenty-two conspicuously across my knees, and cocking my head ever so slightly until the tip of his forward horn peeks bewitchingly over the brim of my hat. This pose has never failed to prove popular with roto-gravure editors, particularly above a caption explaining how I shot down the animal in the nick of time, as it was about to attack my defenseless husband.

And now perhaps it will be of interest if I conclude my little article with a description of the typical day in the life of a lady explorer on *safari*:

I am always up bright and early, often by ten o'clock; and after a light *petit déjeuner* of orange juice, rolls and coffee, I slip into my cunning portable boudoir and attend to my toilette. This is a highly important item of our expedition, and often occupies me for hours. After coating my face thoroughly with a

MEANING NO OFFENSE

specially prepared cold cream, I follow this with a witch-hazel sponge and then a thin coating of powder and perhaps a dash of *Nuit de Passione*; this serves as an excellent ground-work for any expression I may care to adopt.

The following hour from eleven to twelve I devote to my smile practice. Standing before my mirror, I draw my lipstick from the holster and rapidly work up an attractive expression, which I hold steadily for several minutes until it has hardened. I have indeed become quite a sharpshooter with my lipstick; and recently I loaded it, aimed it at my mouth, and produced a perfect smile within the record space of fourteen seconds. I can likewise score heavily with my eyebrow pencil.

When all is in readiness I select a brisk smile, fix it on my lips, and wander out in a *chic* frock for my daily work. While John grinds the crank of the camera, I pose successively on the various heads of animals which the natives have found lying around the woods that morning. Of course I always throw my whole soul into my work; and often an hour or so of

MEANING NO OFFENSE

steady "registering" before the lens will leave me so exhausted that John has to carry me back into my boudoir, where I devote the rest of the afternoon to my "beauty nap" and a massage.

Sometimes after supper the Martin Johnsons will drive over in their armor-plated tank from their near-by home on Paradise Lake; and evening will speed by in this congenial company, with perhaps a hand of whist or a "talk-fest." While the men-folks are in a corner discussing the latest hand-grenades, high explosive shells and rapid-fire Lewis guns with which they hunt big game, or perhaps while Mr. Johnson is showing John the new long-range twelve-inch naval piece which he brought from the coast especially for predatory beetles and field-mice, Osa and I inspect each other's frocks, or indulge in some racy gossip of the water-hole.

It is late that night. The Johnsons have gone at last. In the silence John takes me on his knee; and while the jungle closes in around us, and the vicious fireflies blink hungrily in the bushes, he hums softly:

MEANING NO OFFENSE

*And we shall be the best of pals,
As we grind out reel after reel;
While I supply the animals,
You lend the Sex Appeal.*

I only snuggle closer. The silent jungle stretches on all sides, and yawns.

POEMS APPRAISED AT PRACTICALLY NOTHING

I THOUGHT *I would give them some verses this time, Ma'am, just for the change. Prose gets fair monotonous, after a time, and in a book like this a little variety is not amiss. I thought first to put in some blank pages, so as to give the mind a rest; but I'm afraid I would be arrested for what the censors in Boston would read into them . . . Heh, heh . . .*

"Perhaps you didn't know I was a versifier, Ma'am. Not a poet, that's true; but, when you come down to it, there are not many other versifiers in America who are poets, either . . .

"Here, Ma'am, are some verses I wrote in the new manner of the clever rhyme and the snappy ending. Something cynical, something flip . . . aye! Did you read Hoffenstein's Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing? A fair bit of doggerel; but not near so funny as the reviews they gave it:

MEANING NO OFFENSE

'Were I to be cast on a desert island . . . ' 'Incomparable . . . ' 'A wow, a darb, a pip . . . ' 'Gilbertian . . . ' 'An epoch-making day for American verse . . . ' '. . . in the Heinesque tradition . . . '

"Aye, sometimes it's a wonder there are any real poets left in America at all . . . "

LINES to a Shropshire Lad Who Has Come to the Big City, Explaining How It Is Done.

XI

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
"Just take some lines from Housman
And some from Miss Millay,
And add a last-line snapper,
A brief but smart denial."
But I was one-and-twenty
And writing for the *Dial*.

When I was one-and-twenty,
I heard a wise man say,

MEANING NO OFFENSE

“There’s Hoffenstein, and Parker,
And even F. P. A.;
They’re making dough, and plenty,
Their pomes pull down the pelf.”
Now I am two-and-twenty,
And writing them myself.

*An Example of the Sort of Clever Verse I
Mean, Which We Shall Title, For the Sake of
Argument, “Epilogue.”*

IXI

’Twas the night before Christmas, and all
through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with
care
And love is a kick in the slats.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

*Wherein One of These Poetical Two-Time
Daddies Breaks Down and Confesses All.*

VXI

To judge from my verse, I am Chastity's
Curse,
A rascal, a rake and a roué;
It's off with the old love, and on with a worse,
And Constant Affection is hooey.

And Cupid's a prop, and Romance a flop,
And the old-fashioned Marriage is phoney,
And Passion's all right if you know when to
stop,
But Love is a lot of bologney.

The radical views I express to the Muse
Have a plainly incarnadine tint;
Whenever I suffer a cardiac bruise
My little heart breaks—into print.

Yet in spite of these rhymes of my amorous
crimes,
My private life's notably pale:

MEANING NO OFFENSE

I am happily married, subscribe to the *Times*,
And my grandson is entering Yale.

*Song to Break the Tedium of Riding a Bicycle,
Reading These Verses, or Even Writing Them.*

XVI

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea;
The ploughman homeward plods his weary
 way,
And love is a kick in the slats.

*Poem to Be Carved on the Lining of a Swiss
Cheese Sandwich with the Stick-Pin that My
Great-Uncle Was Married In.*

XXX

Could I write rhymes to Helen, deft and quiet,
And swear to her I ever should be true,
Only to add a last line, and deny it?
You bet I could. In fact, I always do.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Ballade of Disillusionment, Sorrow, and a General Run-Down and Grippy Condition. (You Have No Idea How Easy It Is to Write These Titles. Just Start Them, and They Practically Write Themselves.)

XXXX

Rockabye, baby, in the tree-top,
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock,
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,
And love is a kick in the slats.

The Poet Who Has Nothing But Hard Luck in His Love-Affairs, and Constantly Asks Himself the Reason Why, Has a Sudden Flash of Inspiration.

XXXXX

Perhaps I'd come nearer
If I glanced in a mirror.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

*Ballade, in Conclusion, Giving the Whole
Trick Away (And Cheap at That).*

XXXXXX, I LOVE YOU

Hand the reader a rubber cigar;
Fasten a "Kick Me" sign to his pants;
Smear the seat of his chair with tar;
Fill up his bed with live red ants;

Wind up the little mechanical lizard;
Lift the derby, and hide the brick;
And the critics will cry: "This boy's a wizard!"
"A pippin!" "A wow!" "I laughed myself
sick!"

Blow some snuff when he turns his back;
Pour ground glass in his stein of beer;
Trip him up with a clever crack,
And send the reader upon his ear.

Write him a lyric that's gay and catchy,
But show him the tear-drops behind your
smile;

MEANING NO OFFENSE

And the critics will cry: "I Pagliacci!"
"Written . . . in true Gilbertian style!"

The squirt-gun hid in the *boutonnière*,
And the tricky pencil that falls apart,
And the dribble-glass are perfectly fair—
Fair? As a matter of fact, they're Art!

So shoulder your bag of tricks, worn shiny,
And jangle the coins in your conjurer's purse;
And the critics will cry: ". . . disciple of
Heine!"
"An epochal day for American verse!"

BLUE-PRINTS FOR ANOTHER AMERICAN TRAGEDY

*A*YE, Ma'am. A rare privilege, to interview the president of the Theodore Dreiser Hauling and Construction Company, Limited. In person. And so I thought no doubt they would be interested in this chapter to hear his own plans for the next great edifice he is planning.

"Though it seems a pity, Ma'am, he should be dismantling An American Tragedy so soon after it had been completed. Aye, that's America for you. Already tearing up the foundations of a building while they're still hammering down the roof. 'Tis no wonder that novels have no more of a permanence here, Ma'am. In one year and out the other . . .

"However, when the novel I am speaking of in this chapter is finally finished, it will doubtless last forever. If only because no one else will ever

MEANING NO OFFENSE

have the patience to tear it down again . . . aye . . .”

DUSK—of a summer night.

And the tall walls of an American novel of perhaps 250,000 words—such walls as in time may linger as a mere fable.

And in the center of this tall edifice, or building, a solitary man working alone very patiently by himself—a man of about fifty years, tall, with blue overalls, heavily built, yet not stout, perhaps five feet ten inches or five feet eleven inches in height, wearing a khaki shirt, with grey hair, open at the neck, black shoes, white socks, with a slight stoop, also suspenders, holding in one hand a hod, similar to the hod which is carried by a hod-carrier in one hand, and in the other hand a small trowel, or spade, like the spade, or trowel, carried by another hod-carrier, or else by the same hod-carrier in the other hand, provided of course there is nothing in the other hand of this first hod-carrier at the time, such as a carnation.

This tall, heavily built, yet not stout, man



MEANING NO OFFENSE

works, or *worked*, because our description is over now, very patiently, or conscientiously, sweating in silence, like an elephant piling one block on top of another block with his trunk, except that this man whom we are speaking of was *removing* one block from another block, and had, in addition, no trunk, although on the other hand he wore, unlike an elephant, blue overalls. He would take one block from another block and put it in his hod, and then he would take the second block from a third block, and the third block from still a fourth block, putting the last block into his hod on top of the second block, which was resting meantime on the first block, after which he would lift up the hod containing the blocks on to his shoulder and climb down a ladder to the ground, whereon he would then dump the three blocks, increasing the total number of blocks on the ground to the same extent to which he had decreased the total number of blocks on the building. (Three. *Ans.*)

Having dumped the blocks on to the ground from his hod in this fashion, he would pick up the first block, or the second block, and place

it on top of the third, or first, block, adding to that the second, or first, or third, block, depending on the order in which he had picked them up from the ground onto which he had dumped them from his hod. Before he placed each block on top of the next block, however, he would first pat the top of the preceding block with his spade, or trowel, in order to cover it with cement, a process which, however, was not very successful, owing to the fact that he had no cement on his trowel, or spade, and consequently the third block would immediately tumble down from the second block, and the second block would tumble down from the first block, with the result that all three blocks would be back on the ground again, where they had started from, and he would burst into tears.

At this John Riddell—myself, as I chanced to be—who, up to this point, had taken no part in the conversation, there being no conversation to take part in, said:

“What are these blocks which you are removing, or rearranging, by endeavoring to pile them up again?”

MEANING NO OFFENSE

At this the man in blue overalls, stooping over, arose to his feet and wiped his eyes, addressing the other man who had asked him the preceding question.

"Dese blocks dat youse see," he began, speaking in the up-to-date slang, or Broadwayese, which he often employed to indicate an uncouth laborer, "are paragraphs from my old novel, *An American Tragedy*, which I am at present dismantling, in order ter construct a bigger novel. Hully gee. Upsedaisy."

"But how can you make these new paragraphs fit together?" this from another passerby, a stranger named Gordon Reeperclotz, whose wife had disappeared in 1879 with a glass-blower from Schenectady, a town in which they lived at the time, and who does not appear in our story again.

"I may not have much idea of what youse call construction," replied the speaker in blue overalls, the man who was being addressed by the other, "but I got lots of patience. I got all de patience in de woild. All de time in de woild. All de woids in de woild . . ."

At the same time that he was speaking, he

MEANING NO OFFENSE

was also operating a small "steam-shovel," or crane, which, when he pushed a lever, or pulled a lever, would bury its nose into the ground, or lift up a scoopful of dirt, depending upon whether he had pushed the lever, or pulled it. The man, the speaker, now pointed to the nose of this "steam-shovel," which was buried in the ground, he having pushed the lever, and said distinctly:

"Dirt."

"What is it for?" was John Riddell's question.

"To make more bricks. More bricks, more dirt. More dirt, more material."

"I should think you'd have enough material left over from *An American Tragedy*."

"Oh, but this is—oh, but dis is going ter be a much bigger effort," this from the other speaker, the first. "In fact, in spite of all de bricks, which, owing to de fact dat I have dismantled it, still, because of de scope of dis new woik, and also because of de . . . because of de . . ."

"Better take a deep breath and begin again," cautioned Riddell.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

The man, the first speaker, took a deep breath. "De effort I am planning," he began again, "is ter be de biggest effort ever attempted in America. In fact," taking from the rear-pocket of his blue overalls, which was in front of him, owing to the fact that he was wearing them backwards, a roll of blue-prints, "it, when completed, will measure 146' x 127' x 139' x 26', in addition ter being 476' tall, and weighing altogether $541\frac{3}{4}$ tons, de heaviest volume in America, as well as de fattest, longest, thickest, dullest . . ." And he mopped his forehead with the blue-prints.

"But where is the entrance?" curiously. This from Riddell.

"Oh, dere isn't going ter *be* any entrance," replied the first. "Nobody is ever going ter want ter get inter dis building. Youse see, I've been wasting too much space in all my other efforts," he said, "and so dis one, as an improvement, is going ter be completely solid throughout."

The younger, and shorter, of the two men, John Riddell, looked at the blue-prints in the hand of the other man, who was older than he,

MEANING NO OFFENSE

likewise his senior in age. "How many stories?" he inquired.

"Just one story," the other replied. "De same story I always use. Boy loves girl, bip!—tragedy. Dat's life. Hot dam. *Git* a horse!"

So saying, the latter speaker, he in blue overalls—a man about fifty years of age, perhaps older, yet already known in America as the Master Builder, because of his diligence, or patience—began to pile one block on top of another block, and another block on top of that block, and another block on top of *that* block, and *another* block on top of *that* block . . . and ano . . . hau . . . hau . . . haaugh . . .

Will you lower the shade a little as you go out?

CORTO Y DERECHO

AYE, Ma'am. *I thought I would give them a short story this time, for the novelty. Something in the manner of Ernest Hemingway, say. Though from the way all the other writers in America nowadays are giving us stories in the manner of Ernest Hemingway, that's not so much of a novelty as it should be . . .*

"Hemingway . . . aye. A hard-boiled ego. Pulls his cap down over his eyes, and writes out of the corner of his mouth; yet an agreeable feller enough when you get to read him. In a fair way to being the very best short-story writer in America today, Ma'am. Though when he tries the longer novel, aye, that's another matter. That's another matter.

"Meaning no offense, Ma'am. If Hemingway can say in a couple of pages what Theodore Dreiser fails to get said in eight hundred and thirty-nine, why, Posterity will like him all the better in that thickness. After all, there's only just so much room on a Five-Foot Shelf . . ."

MEANING NO OFFENSE

"How are you going yourself, Ernest?" I asked him.

"You seen this *Men Without Women*?" he says.

"I see it everywheres."

"Well," says Ernest, "I'm going to need a lot of luck with that book."

"They can't beat you, Ernest," said the waiter, "they can't beat you in the short fights."

"Sure," I said. "There's nobody can handle his dialogue like you do. You'll beat them all."

"Maybe," says Ernest. "Sure. I got a chance."

"Handle them like you handled *The Undefeated*."

"Or *Fifty Grand*," said the coffee-boy.

"*Corto y derecho*," he says. "I get you."

I was sitting at a table at the edge of the arena, sipping *Anis del Toro*, and Hemingway was in the center of the ring, under the lights, fighting a bull. As he flung open his dialogue with both hands, the bull charged, tail up. Hemingway swung his plot clear and, as the bull recharged, brought around his dialogue in

MEANING NO OFFENSE

a half-circle that pulled the bull to his knees. We all applauded.

"Why, he's a great bull-fighter," the coffee-boy said.

"They're all trying to imitate him," I said.

"He's all right," said the waiter, resting his bottle on his hip. "He's all right so long as he don't try to drive his point too deep."

"Sure," I said, "maybe he wouldn't last very long in the big fights. But right now he's got everything."

"Huh," said Hemingway, "*toro!*" He took up his dialogue, and the bull charged again. Hemingway side-stepped, swung his plot in back of him and pivoted, so the bull followed a swirl of dialogue and then was left with nothing, fixed by the plot. Ernest swung the dialogue under his nozzle with one hand, to show the fight was over, and waved his hand at us.

"How do you think I'm going?" he said.

"You're going good," I said. "You're going great."

"What do you think about my style?" he says.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

"Keep up that dialogue," I said, "and nothing can touch you."

"Do I look as if I'd last?"

"Sure you'll last," says the coffee-boy. "You could run ten editions the way you look right now."

"I feel good right now," said Ernest. "I feel fine in these short fights."

"You're all right in the short fights," advised the waiter. "Just don't try to drive your point too deep, that's all."

"*Corto y derecho*," says Ernest.

The bull was standing, his four feet square, his head low. Hemingway furled his dialogue with his left hand. The bull's eyes watched him. We all leaned forward.

"He's a great fighter," said the coffee-boy.

"He's the greatest fighter in America," I says.

"He's the greatest fighter in America," said the waiter, "in the short fights."

"Watch this," Ernest says, "this is going to be good."

As he spoke, Hemingway drew forth the point of his story from the folds of his dialogue,

MEANING NO OFFENSE

profiled it on the horns of the bull and, rising on his toes, sighted along the plot toward the climax high up on the bull's shoulders. He dropped his dialogue.

"Now he's going to drive home his point," said the coffee-boy.

"Don't try to go too far below the surface," the waiter warned him.

Corto y derecho Hemingway lanced himself on the bull. There was a shock, and then he felt himself go up in the air. He pushed on the point as he went up and over, and it flew out of his hand, end-over-ending out of the story.

"Look out, Ernest," I says.

He lit on the ground, and the bull was on him. Hemingway, lying on the ground, kicked with his slippered feet like a man keeping a ball in the air. The bull lowered his head.

"What do you say, Ernest?" asked the bull.

"I'm going good," said Hemingway. "I'm going great."

"Sure," said the bull. "You're upside down, that's all."

"What happened?" he asked.

"You tried to drive your point too deep,"

MEANING NO OFFENSE

said the bull. "You went too deep, and it threw you."

"Let's have a drink," he says, rising to his feet.

"Don't you want to fight any more today?" said the bull.

"No, I'd rather sit and talk," said Ernest. "I'd rather talk than fight any day."

They walked across the ring, and the bull pulled several banderillas out of his shoulder and straightened his horns. They came over to my table.

"I want you to meet my friend, Mr. Riddell," said Hemingway. "John, this is the bull."

"Well," said the bull.

"You could make quite a pun on 'bull,'" I said, shaking hands.

"It's been done, though," said the bull.

"That's right," Ernest says.

"Three *Anis del Toro*," I said to the waiter.

"These drinks are on me, by the way," the bull said.

"No, I've got it," says Ernest.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

"I'll toss you for it," said the bull, lowering his horns.

The waiter paused with the bottle on his hip. "Do you want them with water, Ernest?" he said.

"No, I'll take mine straight," says Ernest. "Short and straight."

"*Corto y derecho*," said the waiter.

"That's right," Ernest says.

The waiter filled the glasses.

A STEPSON OF THE GRAND- FATHER OF MOTHER IN- DIA'S AUNT ANSWERS

WELL, Ma'am, perhaps you have been reading the storm of protest which has been stirred up by a lady novelist, a big sewer-and-drain inspector from America who went on a Cook's Tour of India one week-end and subsequently wrote a scorching indictment of a few hundred million people. Meaning no offense, Ma'am.

"We Indians were fair distressed by her book, and Mukerji and Ranga Iyer and others of us have written some classic rebuttals. A Son of Mother India Answers . . . Not that the publicity has worried her any. The more talk she stirs up, the more royalties she drags down . . .

"But perhaps you didn't know I was an Indian myself, Ma'am? Aye, John Riddellhi, born in Bombay, c/o American Express Com-



MEANING NO OFFENSE

pany. I have just read her book on India; and after seeing how easy it is done, I have prepared in return this sensational exposé of the sex life, crime and desolation in America, written in her best prose manner and based on a post-card I once received from a friend in Des Moines. In addition to being an Indian sage and scholar, Ma'am, I am also blind in both eyes, deaf as a post, and can neither read nor write—facts which obviously make me quite as qualified for my investigation as she was for hers . . .”

HAVE you perchance, my friends, ever glanced into a refuse-can? What have you seen, as you removed mayhap the deceased cat whose tail protrudes stiffly from the top, like the peppermint cane in a Christmas stocking? What have you found, as you plunged your wrist eagerly into the rich mixture of empty lobster shells, potato peelings, furry loaves of bread, and grapefruit rinds half filled with sodden coffee grounds—what did you find but garbage! garbage! garbage! What did you expect to find in a refuse-can? Tea-roses?

It is in such a spirit, my head bowed so that

MEANING NO OFFENSE

I won't miss any dirt, that I approach my little treatise upon your land of America—an investigation rendered all the more remarkable by the fact that I have never been to America in my life. In fact, if America is anything like as exciting as I'm going to make it out to be in this forthcoming pamphlet, I can't get there soon enough.

Although I have never been to America, a fact which obviously qualifies me to write of it without any prejudice whatsoever, I am nevertheless informed on good authority of the following terrible fact: *A number of people die in America every year.*

Let us consider for a moment, my friends, ere we peruse our statistics further, what this disturbing fact indicates. It means, first of all, that everyone who is born in America is doomed to certain death. It means that the prevalence of child marriages, disease, ennui and sheer old age take off the majority of the population *within their own lifetime*. Surely this is a thorough indictment of the whole nation. It is high time that a civilized country like India took a hand.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

In the first place, according to a wholly reliable authority (my uncle who lives in Cochin China) the number of child marriages in America today is truly staggering. Children are often aunts and uncles long before they have reached the age of puberty; and sometimes the marriage license bureau in the Municipal Building in New York is entirely blocked by the waiting perambulators of its applicants. Indeed, marriages in this bureau are not at all uncommon between nine and twelve, also between two and five in the afternoon.

The following revolting description of a typical child-marriage in New York was forwarded to me by a friend of a friend who knows a fellow and his wife in Schenectady. They never really *saw* the ceremony themselves, but they know someone who says he did; and consequently I am perfectly safe in assuming that this is typical of the barbaric customs practiced generally all over America today.

In this child marriage of which I am speaking, the groom was a year and two months old, while his little bride-to-be was not born until

MEANING NO OFFENSE

the following Thursday. This complicated things a little, but it turned out all right when her parents agreed to furnish an affidavit. The church was attractively decorated for the ceremony in baby-blue ribbon, and the bridegroom was wheeled up the aisle to the altar by the best man, a stalwart lad of three. In the presence of the minister he solemnly handed over the teething-ring to the bride's mother, who was several months his junior. Following a wedding breakfast of Imperial Granum, the couple left as soon as possible in their perambulator for a honeymoon trip through Central Park.

In a similar child marriage, which took place recently in Boston, according to a reliable authority (*The New York Evening Graphic*), the husband was over ninety-six years of age when he was married; and inasmuch as his little bride was not born until nearly three years later, he died in the meantime of old age. As a result the unfortunate bride was born a widow, and was soundly spanked.

These few examples, all of them on the

MEANING NO OFFENSE

soundest possible hearsay, are sufficient to show the frightful conditions which exist in America today, as far as child marriages are concerned. And as a result, divorces are becoming so prevalent that they are threatening to close the kindergartens. Whither is America drifting?

And not only is the child marriage situation a particularly poignant one, but the spread of disease in America, according to information I discovered recently in my vest-pocket, beggars description. For example, head-colds are a common occurrence in this plague-ridden country; and as a result of a single afternoon on the seashore at Coney Island, local doctors reported over 56,000 cases of sunburn and four babies who had swallowed clamshells. And yet they allow intermarriage between men and women, and possible propagation of these epidemics!

In an effort to get at the bottom of the facts concerning the current state of health in America, a self-appointed committee recently made a thorough investigation of the hospitals and sanatoriums, where they found that *almost*

MEANING NO OFFENSE

every patient in American hospitals was suffering from one disease or another. In a thorough investigation of these institutions, in fact, it was impossible to find a single patient who was really feeling well and up on his toes; and in a number of places, notably the Hospital for Joint Diseases in New York, inmates were discovered suffering from two or three ailments at a time. And yet these unhealthy institutions are not only permitted to exist but are even subsidized by the Government of America!

Nor is the only illness in America confined to these specific locales. After considerable research among the crowds on the streets, in the subways, and Gray's Drug Store on West Forty-fourth Street, the committee learned that out of 500 citizens whom they interviewed, fully 400, or 80%, were afflicted with pyorrhea, *all of them under forty.* In addition the following lurid figures were disclosed:

Eye-strain.....	153
Halitosis.....	1

(Note: He was a Siamese twin and found it out all by himself.)

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Freckles.....	37
Housemaid's Knee.....	191
Ingrowing toe-nails.....	13
Charlie Horse.....	62
Golf.....	227

In addition, 99 thought John Barrymore was their favorite actor, 14 were in favor of Prohibition, and 461 had never been kissed.

Moreover, the following diseases are present today in most of the big cities in these staggering proportions: Tabloid Newspapers, 27%; Literary Teas, 85%; Women Hitch-Hikers, 92%; Transatlantic Flyers, Channel Swimmers and Political Orators, 13%; Radio Loudspeakers, 88%; Golf Pants, 43%; John Roach Straton, 21%. Patent Cigar-Lighters, on the other hand, are on the wane.

Following these shocking revelations concerning the disease prevalent in America, the horrified committee subsequently made a thorough investigation of the State Hospital for the Insane at Matteawan. Here it was discovered that 983 persons, fully 97% of the inmates, were suffering from severe mental disorder and most of the remaining 3%, although

MEANING NO OFFENSE

otherwise normal, admitted that they were being followed around most of the time by a tan beaver who was riding a velocipede. Only one patient went so far as to state that he was perfectly sane; but inasmuch as he informed the committee shortly afterwards that he was really Mabel Walker Willebrandt, and even offered to search the hip-pockets of several members of the Committee in order to prove it, he was also checked off as doubtful. In addition, one or two members of the Committee itself were pretty thoroughly questioned on the way out.

As a result of these staggering statistics, it is found that *only seven-eighths of a person in every thousand is normal*; and since he is only seven-eighths of a person, it will be seen that he is not so very gosh-darned normal, at that.

The rest of the population in America is already practically extinct.

And now let us examine these sensational facts, my friends.

Let us lift from our refuse-can, one by one, these empty lobster shells, these grapefruit

MEANING NO OFFENSE

rinds, these sodden coffee grounds, these furry loaves of bread. Let us turn them over one by one in our fingers, examine them gleefully, and bear them happily, at last, to our library table. There let us commence busily to pile them one atop another again, heaping evidence on evidence in the fashion employed by Miss Mayo in her volume *Mother India*. And lo! What have we achieved as a result of all our effort, *pukka sahib*, gentle reader?

Just another pile of garbage? Just another *Mother India*?

EQUESTRIANISM FOR LADIES

I THOUGHT a Chapter on *Etiquette* right here might appeal to the Ladies, Ma'am. Provided your book appeals to the *Feminine Trade in America*, you've no need to worry about the other sex. Men don't read books, Ma'am; they write them. If the ladies like you, you're a *Best Seller* overnight. Look at Phillips Oppenheim. Look at Carl Van Vechten. Look at André Maurois, and Warwick Deeping, and Richard Halliburton. Aye, just look at them . . .

“‘*How To Behave on a Horse.*’ There's a problem in *Etiquette* that every Lady should know, what with the week-end in America what it is today. ‘*The Sport of Queens,*’ they call it; and nowadays every hostess is ready before your bag is fair unpacked to organize a *steepchase*, say, or have a brisk gallop and hunt breakfast. As though a brisk gallop wasn't hard enough, without also having to hunt breakfast . . .

MEANING NO OFFENSE

"Because when you come down to a horse, Ma'am—and personally I come down to a horse about every third step he takes—there is no other form of sport in the world that can compare with it—barring, perhaps, stepping on a tennis-ball at the head of a very long flight of marble stairs, preferably with a nasty turn in them half-way down. I know, Ma'am. I know . . .

"For the facts I have assembled in this chapter, I should like to give credit to Athletics for Women by Lucille Eaton Hill, published by Macmillan in 1903 and as modest a handbook on the subject as you would want. I know 'tis not so recent as the newer books on Etiquette—Hathaway's Manners, for instance—but I found it on the whole more pleasurable. I only hope the few facts I have presented here will be helpful to lady Equestriennes. If they carry this chapter with them at all times, in the rear pocket of their riding-bloomers, Ma'am, at least it will always be something to fall back on . . .

"Aye . . ."

THESE fine fall days, with the air like wine and the leaves crisp under foot, what is more

MEANING NO OFFENSE

pleasant to mount upon, to gallop with over hill and dale, to rein in at last beside one's hitching-post and dismount from, tired but happy, than—a horse?

It is a thousand pities that woman's good comrade, the Bicycle, has felt her fickleness. The tendency of late has been to allow this faithful friend to slip into the discard; and today lady cyclists on the Avenue are few and far between. Park Avenue no longer witnesses the familiar row of high-wheeled "bikes" drawn up before Mrs. Rensselaer's verandah at tea-time. Fashionable dowagers have eschewed this loyal machine for roller-skates or the luxury of a motorcycle side-car; and the democratic Bicycle seems doomed to neglect.

Yet with the passing of the Bicycle, ladies have turned at last to the healthful exercise of horseback riding; and the morning canter down Fifth Avenue has succeeded the brisk spin on a wheel through upper Harlem. Of late the popularity of equestrianism for ladies has progressed by leaps and bounds, as indeed has the horse; and the horsewoman is fast becoming a familiar figure among our younger *dé-*

MEANING NO OFFENSE

butantes. Consequently these few remarks at this season upon the finer points of horsemanship may not be considered amiss.

Being a horsewoman and being horsy are not synonymous; neither does one depend upon the other. The sensitive girl need not feel that her intimate association with horses will in any way lower her own standards to the level of those of the horse. Just as fine feathers do not make fine birds, so do stable slang, groomish mannerisms or sporty clothes not indicate a good horsewoman.

The selection of the proper dress for the saddle (*i.e.*, for the lady riding *in* the saddle) is of the first importance; since once a habit is formed by a young girl, it is often very hard to change and may last for years, particularly if made of some durable material. Safety-skirts should always be worn; and of these there are several different patterns. One is practically an apron, which has no back to it, but which on the saddle gives the effect of a skirt. This model is apt to prove awkward, however, when the lady dismounts, unless she is wearing a similar skirt in the rear or walks backwards. A

more modest pattern has an open seam back of the legs and up around the pommel, which may be fastened together when the wearer is off the horse. The safest way is to wear both these skirts at once, and stay on the horse anyway till after twilight.

The underclothing for riding should be as carefully considered as the outer garments. The corset or corset waist should be loose enough for absolute comfort; and balbriggan drawers, such as the boys wear, are best in the long run (*e.g.*, from thigh to ankle, and return). Over the drawers may be worn a pair of equestrian tights, riding-breeches, or a plain oak barrel.

A black derby is the correct hat for winter, and a plain straw sailor for summer, the three-cornered hat being a recent innovation and distinctly unbecoming. Hats should be worn well down on the forehead, and fastened beneath the chin with a broad elastic. The hair should be plainly braided and tied at the neck with a ribbon; and for neckwear I recommend an Ascot stock fastened with an appropriate pin, such as a horse medallion.

Very baggy riding-breeches and polo-legged

MEANING NO OFFENSE

boots should be worn in the cross-saddle. The stiff riding-boot is much better than the legging, as it does not disclose the shape of the limb. The coat should be split up the back to allow the skirts to fall on either side of the horse, and securely fastened to a button on each knee (the rider's knee). In this manner the whole thigh and upper limb are concealed, providing the nattiest and withal most modest costume for the rider. On the other hand, the most modest costume for the horse consists of a pair of long lace drawers which are drawn up over his rear legs and tied securely about his stomach.

The advisability of riding astride has been much agitated of late; but for my own part I earnestly believe that the cross-saddle for women will prove more or less of a fad, and will disappear with such inventions as the radio and the aeroplane. Most women are too broad-shouldered across the hips, and too short and thick from the hip to the knee, either to look well or ride well astride; and then there is something also to be said for the feelings of the horse. After all, a horse has feelings.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

The proper method for a lady to mount a horse is very similar to that of a lady climbing into the upper berth of a Pullman, except that there isn't any ladder. In mounting from the ground, stand on the left side of the horse, gather the reins in the right hand, and place the hand on the upper pommel; then grasp the horn of the saddle with the left hand and face slightly toward the horse's shoulder. Put the ball of the left foot in the groom's right hand, and at an agreed signal straighten the left knee and at the same time spring from his hand as he gives a sudden upward impetus.

Picking yourself up from the ground on the opposite side of the horse, with the assistance of the groom, and dusting off your clothes, you will next attempt to mount the horse from the right side. Place the ball of the right foot in the groom's hand and vault upward, just as the horse yawns and edges sideways in disgust, leaving you still balanced on one toe in the groom's hand and wobbling in the air. A small American flag and a blue spotlight will assist at this point.

After tying the horse securely, front and

MEANING NO OFFENSE

rear, approach him again from the left side, grasp the horn with the left hand and face slightly toward the horse's shoulder. Place the ball of the left foot in the groom's right hand and at an agreed signal straighten the left knee, just as your foot slips from the groom's hand and butts into the pit of his stomach. Plant the right foot wildly upon his chest as he grabs for your left knee, cling to his hair with your right hand, swing your other foot in a wide circle in the air, clutch his left ear, and manage to straddle his neck. Reach desperately for the horn and haul yourself upward as the groom gropes slowly to his feet under your skirts. Execute a sudden take-off with your left foot, stamping lightly on his face for the last time as you lift yourself across the saddle like a sack of wheat, squirm around onto your hips, cross your right leg securely about the pommel, and turn triumphantly. The groom will presently be discovered under the horse.

Perhaps an easier method, from the point of view of the groom, would be for him to pull the horse's legs out from under it and flop the animal over on its side. While the horse is in

MEANING NO OFFENSE

this position the lady rider may sit down on the saddle and adjust her legs with ease; and all the groom has to do is to pick up the horse again.

The proper gaits for a saddle-horse are the walk, trot and canter, similar to the gear shifts of an automobile, except that a horse has no reverse. The would-be rider would do well to practice these movements before she learns to ride; and perhaps no better method can be found to understand the action of a horse than to mount to the head of a long flight of hardwood stairs, sit on a roller-skate, and allow a friend to give you a gentle push forward. After the stairs have been descended in this manner three or four times, the pupil will have mastered the fundamentals of equestrianism and secured a firm working base. The remaining details may be picked up with a little practice each morning on a pogo stick.

Having acquired the up-and-down motion, the only difficulty now lies in making your *up* coincide with the *up* of the horse. Complete confidence is necessary for the expert rider, since the horse seems to know when you are

MEANING NO OFFENSE

frightened, and rarely fails to take advantage of it in his quiet way. Remember that so long as you are on a horse nothing can touch you, except possibly the horse; and since this only happens with a resounding smack once every two or three minutes, you are perfectly safe until you hit the ground. Lean far forward in the saddle, grasp the horse tightly about the neck, shut your eyes, kick out your heels and, with a leap and a bound, you are off.

Too much cannot be said for the glow of health that surrounds the fair rider after a day in the saddle. Her eyes dance with joy when the ride is over, her breath comes in short pants, and both her cheeks are flushed with a delicate pink. Indeed, once the novice has mastered the directions contained in this article, mounted a gallant horse and felt the firm flanks, the heaving back, the rise and fall of the hard saddle beneath her, she will realize at last that for sheer happiness and the joy of living, there is nothing like taking a brisk walk.

We have endeavored, in the foregoing instructions, to offer the lady novice advice upon

MEANING NO OFFENSE

how to mount a horse, and how to ride a horse. And now, one more word about dismounting. Fortunately, this is the one part of horseback riding that the beginner takes to instinctively. Simply use your head.

NEW LADIES' CLUBS TO CONQUER

WAS I speaking recently of Richard Halliburton, Ma'am, he who wrote *The Royal Road to Romance* and *The Glorious Adventure?* Travel books describing the quaint manners and customs of the native tribes along the Chautauqua Circuit . . . Peter Pan Halliburton, they call him. Lord Byron of the globe-trotters. Recently elected favorite explorer of the Tuesday Afternoon Ladies' Club of Ypsilanti, Mich., and a good big kiss . . .

"Aye, Ma'am, he's down in South America now, so I'm told, gathering material for still a third book of adventures, to be called—but no doubt he would not want me to mention that name. Too modest for that. He hates publicity like the plague. Of course, I mean no offense . . .

"I see by the papers that he has just completed a swim through the Panama Canal—purely for

MEANING NO OFFENSE

the exercise, of course; I doubt if he'll ever mention a word about it in his book. Paid \$.36, so they say; and as a result the Government was forced to open all the locks for him, one after another, lower tons of water, turn untold wheels and grind countless gears, spend hundreds of dollars, and tie up the traffic of several nations so that Richard Himself could make the front page. They say an army sharp-shooter even followed after him in a small boat with a high-powered rifle, to shoot the crocodiles. But he never missed once, Ma'am . . .

"Well, Mr. Halliburton's success puts me in mind of a similar spectacular swim of my own; and so for this Chapter I thought I would try to give them an account of this Glorious Adventure of mine, just as the Romantic Richard might have written it himself. It ought to please the ladies . . ."

HEARKEN, girls!

I represent the Spirit of Bubbling Youth, Youth at its maddest, Youth at its gayest. I give you adventure, dreams, surcease and a severe pain in the neck. I am the Don Juan of

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Romance. I am the Slightly Pied Piper of *weltschmerz*. And I am only a boy, if that.

Phneeee!

Hearken, girls! I place to my lips the Magic Flute of Adventure, and sound the call o' the Gypsy Trail. Who will wander with me, hand in hand, down the Royal Road to Romance? Hearken, middle-aged suburban housewives, impressionable girl graduates, Thursday afternoon bridge clubs, sex-starved librarians, and the rest of my fluttering, feminine, Middle-Western audience. Look, I'm calling you.

Phnee! Phneeee!

Then come with me, Mrs. Chairman and Lady Members of the Englewood (N. J.) Palisades Hiking and Tennis Club. Let us fling aside our everyday drudgeries and cares, our needless household worries and our husbands. Let us loosen our stays, shed our clothes, and thrust vine-leaves in our hair. See! We extend our bare great-toes with a nervous giggle, wriggle them tentatively, touch them at last to the silvery asphalt. Whoops! We are free! So toss your heads, girls, bend your knees, fling wide your arms, grabbing wildly once or twice

MEANING NO OFFENSE

to regain your balance, and follow me, follow me in a dancing, prancing, nancing line, toward the water's edge!

Phneeeeeee!

On the night before my Glorious Adventure, I honestly just couldn't sleep a wink. To think that my dearest dream was about to come true on the morrow! Since I first encountered Mr. Halliburton, it has ever been my dearest ambition to follow in his winged footsteps, foot-loose and fancy-free, tossing off the trammels and cleaning up the royalties, wandering away from civilization and exploring the quaint manners and customs of the natives along the Chautauqua Circuit. The time that Richard had taken a scrub-bath in the Taj Mahal Pool, the time that he had carved his initials on the top of Mount Olympus, even the delirious moment when he had spit off the Matterhorn, all these in turn had held me spellbound; but of all his exotic experiences none had seemed so utterly romantic to me as his oft-mentioned (by himself) swims across the Tiber and the Hellespont, the Mississippi and the Nile. How, I asked myself, could I

MEANING NO OFFENSE

equal this dazzling record? What body of water could I find which he hadn't swum across already? In a flash I had the answer.

I would swim the Hudson River from Weehawken to Forty-second Street!

As the hour of my adventure approached at last, I felt that I could stand the suspense no longer. As in a dream I rose, flung my scarlet dressing-gown about my shoulders, and tip-toed softly down to the river. The silent night, the silver moonlight, the rippling waters were like a paragraph from one of his own books. Mayhap—as so often occurred in Mr. Halliburton's flowing accounts—I likewise should meet a wood-nymph face-to-face! Mayhap I should also happen upon some enchanted deity, such as Richard encountered near the Porch of Maidens on the Acropolis! I reclined upon my stomach, as he had done before the Taj Mahal Pool, and gazed into the dark, mirror-like waters.

Stay! Whose features stared back at me? What strange face was reflected to my startled gaze? Had this magic night transformed me into some mythical god? Was I man or was I

MEANING NO OFFENSE

faun? And if I was a faun, where had I gotten that black moustache?

"Am I the Great God Pan?" I asked my reflection softly, "seeking to play upon his sylvan reeds, far from the Jersey copse—?"

"I don't understand a word you're sayin'," replied a gruff voice behind my back, "but if you don't get off my beat, I'll run you in!"

Alas, Pan! Alas, memories of Mr. Halliburton! I turned, assisted rather violently from the rear, and flitted into the night.

For the course of my spectacular swim, I chose the same route that is customarily followed by all the other ferries. This route extends from Weehawken, N. J., eastward across the Hudson River to Forty-second Street, New York, thence straight across town to Times Square, up Broadway one block and eastward on Forty-third Street to the Town Hall lecture platform. The women, I figured, would be there already.

Everything was in readiness as the Great Morning broke bright and clear. Like Mr. Halliburton, I chose to travel rather light, in case I was attacked by a shark or a police-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

boat; and in addition to my *crêpe de Chine* bathing suit, my equipment consisted only of a trusty pair of water-wings, some facial cream (in case of sunburn), a bundle of photographs of myself standing before the Parthenon, and a fountain pen in case I was requested for an autograph en route. A tugboat followed in my rear, loaded with copies of my book, to be placed on sale at the conclusion of my swim.

Needless to say, my heart went pit-a-pat as the moment of my swim drew nigh. For months I had trained eagerly, in the swimming pool at the Hotel Naomi; but nevertheless I was all of a flutter as I tested my water-wings, dipped one ankle in the cold water, drew it out, and turned to face the camera for a last time. As far as I could see in either direction the shore was crowded with adoring females, waving their handkerchiefs, tossing roses, blowing me kisses and swooning with rapture. In my simple boyish modesty, I was very much "fussed" by all this adulation, and to cover my embarrassment I began to autograph books as fast as possible; but at last the surge of ladies pressed forward and literally forced me off the

MEANING NO OFFENSE

end of the pier. With a splash I landed in the water, turned, and struck out for the New York shore, followed by a cheering boat-load of my fair admirers.

For a time all went well. I was somewhat bothered by over-eager ladies who would dive overboard, swim up alongside me and persuade me to autograph one of my books; but the thought of the royalties invariably buoyed me up. Rod after rod I progressed, battling the tide, pausing occasionally to nod to acquaintances or speak a few words into a radio microphone lowered before me. Gradually the increased number of floating egg-crates, paste-board boxes, half-sandwiches and drifting vegetables warned me that I was nearing my cherished destination, New York. And at this moment occurred a most unfortunate accident, which I have never revealed before this moment.

Perhaps encouraged by the nearness of my goal, I had unwittingly increased my strokes until I was some distance ahead of the pursuing boat-load of female admirers. In addition a light mist had sprung up over the surface of the river; and this served to add to the con-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

fusion. As I swam into the conglomerate mass of drifting objects alongside the Forty-second Street pier, the boat lost track of my bobbing head; and the next moment, to my chagrin, I discovered that they were directing their cheers and applause toward a nearby head of cabbage.

In vain I tried to shout, to call their attention to this error. Amid the cries and hysterical confusion of the crowd, the unfortunate mistake in identity was not noticed. While I drifted alone and forgotten beneath the pier, too exhausted to hoist myself out of the water, my jealous eyes beheld these misguided admirers lift the head of cabbage to the bank, kissing it, fondling it and besieging it for autographs; and my last bitter memory, as I drifted helplessly out to sea, was the impression of the fickle crowd bearing this impostor vegetable on their shoulders toward the Town Hall. As a matter of fact, I understand that it subsequently completed a very satisfactory lecture tour, swam the Panama Canal, and is now contemplating a book of romantic adventures in Mexico and South America.

I was, I regret to add, drowned.

THE MAN WHO KNEW LEWIS

AYE, Ma'am. *Us Rotarians are mighty grateful to Sinclair Lewis. Did you read his The Man Who Knew Coolidge? That book was quite popular amongst us folks out in the Middle West, though I noticed the East didn't give it much time. Not that we are Rotarians any more, out here. No, Ma'am. At least, we don't call ourselves Rotarians. Now we are all Intelligentsia . . .*

"You see, the way it happened was this. When Sinclair first wrote Babbitt and Main Street, we began to realize that maybe it was the thing nowadays to be sophisticated, and cynical, and read Lewis, and subscribe to the Mercury. And I tell you, Ma'am, it didn't take us long to change, either. It was so easy, in fact, that it is hard to believe we changed at all.

"And what I have in this chapter today is a



MEANING NO OFFENSE

little talk I handed out to the boys in the Pullman smoker on that very subject—much the sort of talk I've heard Sinclair make himself. I just thought it might interest them to see what a big influence Lewis has had on America. In fact, when our Intelligentsia Clubs have their big convention in Zenith next year, we're going to ask him to be Permanent Chairman. After all he has done for us, Ma'am, he fair deserves it . . ."

AND I certainly do enjoy listening to you gentlemen and getting your views. That's one of the nice things about being a cynic like this: you can guarantee you'll meet a lot of other cynics and real he-intellec[t]s with sophisticated opinions and ideas that will agree with you.

And now let me tell you: the way I look at America—

I don't mean to suggest for one second I care very much about this country, or I got any sympathy for it, any more than the rest of you fellows—of course, we all know that's very old-fashioned and Rotarian—but I've been giving it a whole lot of attention lately, and— After all, like a fellow was saying to us at the weekly

MEANING NO OFFENSE

meeting of our Intelligentsia Club the other day—nobody that *is* anybody agrees with *everybody*. Well, believe me, that just about hits the nail on the head. That's just about what we fellows have got to remember. We got to find out what this country is thinking, so we'll be able to think the opposite, because what I mean, unless we know what everybody else thinks, how are we ever going to really find out what we think ourselves?

And me—why, say, I read the Americana section of the *Mercury*—that's the smart paper in my home town, New York—I read it like some folks read a book. And as a result of all this, and some clever novels I been reading by a fellow named Lewis, I've come to the firm conclusion—

I tell you, there's one fellow has got the dope, and that's this novelist Lewis—Sinclair Lewis, of maybe it's Upton Sinclair, sometimes I mix them up—I mean the one wrote *Babbitt* and *Main Street*—anyways, there's a fellow that's sure got the low-down on this country, right to a T. He knows his ripe tomatoes. And sophisticated? Why, that fellow is so sophisticated he

MEANING NO OFFENSE

don't approve of *anything*! Golly, I thought we were pretty cynical at our Intelligentsia Club when we learned to laugh at Rotary and real-estate and radio—but what that fellow Lewis can laugh at isn't even funny! Maybe his novels aren't very good novels, what I mean, maybe they aren't what you'd call classic—

And say, by golly, it's beyond me where the public, taking them buyin' large, get all this stuff about J. M. Barrie and Dickens and all them classics that aren't really sophisticated and clever at all. When I was a kid, I admit, I used to think *Peter Pan* was pretty good, but how a grown-up Intellectual like us can help but laugh at Christopher Morley or Mark Twain or A. A. Milne or even Mary Roberts Rinehart and Zane Grey and them out-of-doors writers—how they can read them old-fashioned homely books when there is sophisticated writers like this Lewis or Cabell or Van Vechten or Nathan and Mencken or clever, cynical writers like that—

And make believe it isn't some problem for a fellow like Lewis to write a book, either. Why

MEANING NO OFFENSE

I heard a fellow say he knew a fellow said that Lewis used ten dictaphones for every novel. Think of it. Of course, I don't know whether that's true or not, but I do know for a fact that he employs half a dozen stenographers, and he sits down and dictates to them all at once, and he just says everything that comes into his head, without even stopping to think, and then he has to go over it all and make it sound dull—of course that isn't hard, if a fellow is at all gifted that way—but then he's got to keep adding and adding to it until he's got enough to make a book—why, say, I should think he'd go crazy writing it, let alone reading it over after it's been written. I know personally I never can read his books myself, and mind you I didn't even have to write them. Golly, he certainly is clever—

But now to come down to the point of my story. I hope to be able to give you an agreeable little surprise. I know Lewis personally!

Yes, sir, in fact we grew up together; we're very old friends and we have a great deal in common—fact is, he even wrote a book about me once—by the way, maybe I haven't intro-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

duced myself, gentlemen, my name is Babbitt, George F. Babbitt—just call me Schmaltz—look me up sometime if you are ever around the Club on Tuesdays—

Because we got quite an up-and-coming little Club, if I do say it myself. We meet every Tuesday right in the very same club-rooms where the old Kiwanis used to meet—as a matter of fact, we really still got all the same members, except that now we don't call ourselves Kiwanis any more—and we prepare a little paper on how America is going to the dogs, and maybe read one of Mr. Lewis' books—maybe even *Babbitt*—

Oh, I'm not ashamed to tell you gentlemen, in all confidence, I used to be a sort of a Rotarian myself. I used to boost America, and have a radio and sell real estate, and take the family out riding on Sundays in the Buick—I even owned a bungalow with slots in the bathroom for old razor-blades—why, believe it or not, gentlemen, until this fellow Lewis came along I used to actually believe I was having a good time and enjoying myself! And then he shown us how unsophisticated we really was,

MEANING NO OFFENSE

how the big progressive up-to-date thing to do today was to be a cynic, and—well, I guess today you gentlemen won't find a more sophisticated bunch east of the Mississippi than our little Intelligentsia Group, if I do say it who shouldn't—

Mind you, I don't want you gentlemen to think we are the only pebble on the beach, not by a long shot, no, sirree, there are hundreds of other Intelligentsia Clubs just like ours springing up all over the country, particularly through the Middle West where they have been reading Lewis and finding out it's the thing to do to be sophisticated, I mean—we are really spread out like the spokes of a great wheel—it's a real Intellectual awakening, and we are planning to have Intelligentsia Hat-Bands and a National Sneer, and next year we are holding a big Convention in Zenith—

There is just one thing has been worrying us lately, and yesterday Mencken and Nathan and a few other members of our Club were talking to Lewis, and we asked him what he was going to write about in his next book, because of course after he had abolished Rotary

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Clubs, and radio, and real estate, and doctors, and ministers, and politics, and business, and God—we were wondering what else he could find for us to disapprove of. And so after thinking the matter over very carefully Mr. Lewis finally decided that in his next book he will attack Life; and so he is going to do a great deal of research, and try to come into contact with Life in some way, and if possible find out something about it.

It certainly will be a big thing for us Intellectuals, all right, and after Mr. Lewis has abolished Life we are all going to have a big parade and a barbecue, and bring the little woman and the kiddies, and Mr. Lewis has promised to speak—

I tell you, gentlemen, Mr. Lewis has taught us Rotarians how to *think*.

A CHILD'S VIEW OF AMERICA

DID *I ever mention to you about the time that I went to Westport to interview Hendrick Van Loon? He who wrote America and The Story of Mankind, and The Life and Times of Pieter Stuyvesant, you know. Historian, so they call him . . .*

"Aye, Ma'am. 'Tis a strange thing to explain why Mr. Van Loon always makes me feel so childish when I listen to him. Seventeen months old I must have been during that interview—or was it sixteen? I don't remember. Perhaps it is the way he tries so hard to make everything perfectly clear. 'Let us suppose for a minute that Civilization is a sleeve-garter,' or, 'If we imagine for the moment that the world is a pickled onion . . .'

"Quaint, they call him. Did you note his drawings, Ma'am? They're quaint, too. It must be nice to be known as quaint . . . aye. If you're

MEANING NO OFFENSE

quaint enough, Ma'am, you can get away with anything . . . No offense, you understand."

"HISTORY is a suspender button," said Mr. Van Loon. "It ties up the past with the future. Its right to exist depends entirely upon this ability to hold up the past to the present. As long as it covers the facts, we are content.

"But as civilization gradually grows a little older, yea, and stouter and fuller, the strain upon history becomes greater. And finally, one fine day, pop! goes our suspender button, and down comes the past, and for a moment we see the facts of existence.

"And we sew on a new suspender button as fast as we can, and hoist up the past again.

"This is called Progress.

"Heigh-ho."

"Heigh," I agreed, "ho!"

Mr. Van Loon was sitting in a comfortable rocking-chair on his Westport farm; and I was sitting in his lap, interviewing him. (This may seem an odd place for an interview; but it was perfectly natural at the time. Perhaps it was

MEANING NO OFFENSE

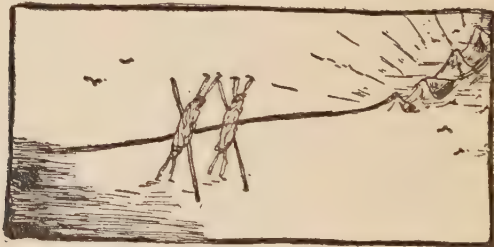
because I was dressed in a pair of pink rompers, and carried a tin sand-pail and a shovel.)

For a long time we rocked back and forth in silence, while Mr. Van Loon drew a picture:

THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION



(“You have it upside down,” said Mr. Van Loon.)



THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION

MEANING NO OFFENSE

"Tell me," I sighed, twining my chubby fingers intently in his long white beard, "about the Progress of Civilization."

(What I actually said was "Temme abow pwousilation," because my mouth was full of something which I discovered presently was a rubber nipple. That is the effect that Mr. Van Loon has on me. It is all I can do to keep from calling him Granpa.)

"Civilization," said Mr. Van Loon, "is relative." And he patted me on my golden curls.

"Let us imagine for a moment that America is an apple. It is a nice juicy apple. It hangs very tempting on the bough. Its cheeks glow like coals.

"Inside this apple are a lot of black seeds. Some of them are Mr. George Washington, and some of them are Mr. Abraham Lincoln, and some of them are Benjamin Franklin and General Grant and President Coolidge.

"But there is one little seed which is different from all the other little seeds in this nice rosy apple. For one thing, it has legs. When you bite it in half, it wiggles. And perhaps it will

MEANING NO OFFENSE

make it clear what I mean if we imagine that this apple is a buzz-saw.

"A buzz-saw is a very useful instrument—provided you do not try to ride it like a bicycle. Then it becomes a terrible instrument of destruction. In this respect, it is like a Pot-ted Ger-a-ni-um."

("Don't hyphenate," I murmured, "I can follow you.")

"In order to explain what I mean by Civilization," continued Mr. Van Loon, "let us imagine that this potted geranium is a clothes-horse. The function of a clothes-horse is to horse clothes. You do not have to feed it oats. It does not even go out at night, like the furnace. It is an A-1 clothes-horse.

"But you cannot ride it, any more than you can ride a potted geranium.

"Civilization is a pretty funny proposition."

CHAPTER III

*The Declaration of Independence: George
Washington Takes Command of the
Army. Reconstruction.*

“But let us suppose that this clothes-horse, America, is tethered out in a field of daisies. All the other nations, the Frenchmen and the Dutch and the Englishmen, are all daisies, too. And suppose that all the stars and planets, as far as you can see, are all a field of daisies; and suppose you and I were to walk across this field of daisies and ask them where we were going. Would the daisies tell?”

I scooped a blob of Imperial Granum from my bib, and shook my head thoughtfully.

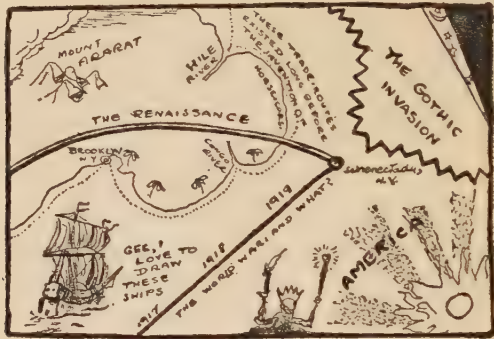
“Yesterday I bought a brand-new pencil-sharpener. I put in a pencil, and I turned the handle as fast as ever I could. But the pencil would not sharpen. It was just as dull as ever. What good is a pencil-sharpener, I asked my friend, if it cannot sharpen my pencil?”

“‘That is not a pencil,’ he said. ‘That is your finger.’”

MEANING NO OFFENSE

“He was right. You cannot ride a pencil-sharpener; and America is the hope of the world.”

Mr. Van Loon rocked me back and forth in his lap as he drew another picture:



AMERICA

“America,” said Mr. Van Loon, “must choose. It is up to the Next Generation: Which?”

I shifted restlessly in his lap, and nodded.

“But let us suppose for a moment that the universe is a jelly-bean . . .”

Mr. Van Loon ceased abruptly. Slowly the expression on his face changed to one of be-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

wilderment, and then to shocked surprise. He started to his feet with a sudden cry.

"I'm sorry," I said impulsively.

He held me at arm's length in front of him, and looked helplessly right and left. "Nurse," he called. "O nurse!"

"I'm *awfully* sorry, Mr. Van Loon," I repeated earnestly. "That was a very childish thing to do."

"NURSE!" shouted Mr. Van Loon desperately, shifting his weight with a slight grimace. "Will you take this reader away, if you please . . ."

"Isn't it funny," I confided to the nurse as she carried me out, "that Mr. Van Loon should have such an effect on me? Why, I haven't done a thing like that for *years* . . ."

HOLLYWOOD BOY

A Scenario for an Autobiography

DID you know I had been to Hollywood, Ma'am? Aye, and interviewed Ambrose Deacon there—he was the author of *Spider Boy*, you know, though Carl Van Vechten's name is on the cover—and heard from his own lips the secret of how he became so popular with the movie queens . . .

“Seated in my ranch near Santa Fé, I was, when his telegram was handed to me. ‘Dear Jack,’ he wired, ‘I have more gals on my lap than I know what to do with. Come quick. Ambrose.’ So I packed my bags and left for Hollywood on the next train; though to be frank, I’ve never really known a man who had more gals than he knew what to do with. If you know what to do with one, I always say, you know what to do with them all . . .



MEANING NO OFFENSE

"Who is Ambrose Deacon, Ma'am? Some say he is Carl Van Vechten; and some say, on the other hand, that Carl Van Vechten is Ambrose Deacon. Though, since Ambrose Deacon is so modest and shy, Ma'am, that latter could hardly be true. Meaning no offense, you understand . . ."

OWING to the congenital appeal of Ambrose Deacon for himself, the limited appeal of his novels had never really satisfied him. Before his announcement of *Hollywood Boy*, to be sure, he had enjoyed a modest reputation, if not a reputation for modesty, in the world of letters. His stories of the local color in Harlem had been accepted as sophisticated by mail-clerks and milkmen, he had eaten in the Algonquin and written feelingly about cats, and his rapidly cumulating essays had been published in rapidly culminating volumes.

Nevertheless, prior to the announcement of *Hollywood Boy*, the world, artistic or cinema, had never appreciated him half as much as he had appreciated himself. Now, however, he had suddenly become a Hollywood celebrity of gratifying if local importance. He had been

MEANING NO OFFENSE

photographed shaking hands with Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford had elected him an Honorary Vice-President of the Our Girls Club, and he had proved one of the most popular fiancés which Patsy Ruth Miller had had in weeks. Clara Bow devoted an entire article comparing him favourably to Gilbert Roland.

Arriving in the world of the cinema with nothing but his own opinion of himself, he had proceeded at once to establish himself as the Don Juan of this remarkable community; and now, seated in his magnificent suite (*adv.*) in a luxurious bungalow (*adv.*) of the superlative Hotel Ambassador (*adv.*) and surrounded by the exotic gals of the fourth largest profession in the world, he permitted himself a slight sigh of weariness. How different—he loosened the panting arms of Bebe Daniels from about his neck—how different life seemed to him now, since he had become the most sought-after figure in Hollywood. How different, Ambrose reflected, shifting Marion Nixon to his left knee, from his former easy obscurity. He uncoiled Esther Ralston from about his knees, and slung her fretfully across the floor. And yet . . .

MEANING NO OFFENSE

As Jack Riddell approached the door of *Siesta*—summoned from his ranch near Santa Fé by his old friend's urgent wire—a series of piercing shrieks, above which mounted a deep-voiced, vociferous Damn you! rent the air. The door of the room flew open, and a gentleman with disheveled hair landed on his neck at Jack Riddell's feet. He rose at once and winked: "Poor Ambrose. He is slightly temperamental."

"Are you hurt?" gasped Jack.

"Nothing can hurt me," he smiled. "My name is Will Morrissey, and I am used to being thrown out of places. This is nothing," he tittered, "you should see what he did to Stella, the Star Gazer!"

Jack Riddell burst open the door; and then halted on the threshold aghast at what he saw. Ambrose's room had been decorated to represent the banquet scene from *Thaïs*. Every chair was heaped high with flowers and fruit in silver and gold vessels, studded with rubies and emeralds, and the walls were hung with rare tapestries embroidered with diamonds. In each corner of the room a different band played,

MEANING NO OFFENSE

respectively, a minuet, a pavane, a fox-trot, and a tango; back and forth across the rich Persian carpets servitors in vermilion doublets and hose led white panthers and pink-faced baboons; there was a continuous display of Chinese fireworks in the closet. Over the floor of this vast incredible room, around the tables and chairs, across the radiators and from the chandeliers dangled beautiful gals of every type and description, blonde or brunette, tall or short, thin or stout, seductive or innocent, in tiger-skins or in sunbonnets, Cleopatras or Dorothy Vernons, Everybody's Sweetheart or Everybody's Good Time; and in the center of this characteristic descriptive paragraph, his pale face barely visible beneath a bower of feminine limbs, Ambrose Deacon nodded weekly to his friend.

"Ambrose!" gasped Jack Riddell, tripping slightly over Billie Dove as he hurried across the room.

Take off your quotation-marks and make yourself sophisticated, Ambrose welcomed him. All the chairs seem to be occupied, he sighed, but just push over Joan Crawford a little and

MEANING NO OFFENSE

come sit here in my lap . . . He brushed Phyllis Haver and Constance Talmadge unceremoniously to the floor, and cleared a space . . . How do you like my new surroundings? he asked, pointing proudly to the preceding descriptive paragraph.

Well, hesitated Jack Riddell tactfully.

The style *is* a little cheap, I admit, Ambrose conceded, but it is said to be awfully clever satire. And if one is being satiric, one can get away with anything. Besides, they consider it quite smart, here in Hollywood . . .

Ambrose, repeated Jack in a dazed voice, I had no idea you were so popular.

Poor dear gals, smiled Ambrose wanly, they *do* seem to be crazy about me, don't they? They won't give me a minute's peace. This morning I found four of them in my bath. Of course, he admitted, I can quite understand how they feel . . . He shook Greta Garbo off his ankle, and wriggled his cramped leg gingerly . . . why, they hang around me so. I really don't blame them. Sometimes I feel that way about myself.

I suppose they keep you pretty busy, said

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Jack, putting his arm around Lila Lee, merely to keep his balance.

Busy? Ambrose sighed. Life in Hollywood is just one round of excitement. Parties, teas, swimming-dances . . . Do you see this sun-burn? That was from a half-hour I spent at Maliku Beach trying to get a coat of tan like Evelyn Brent's. Do you see those manly cal-louses on my hand? Ping-pong with Fay Wray. If I'm not dropping in at Eddie Sutherland's house at four o'clock in the morning I'm playing Puss-in-the-corner at Jim Cruze's or motoring out to Billy Haines for that new game of ours . . . He giggled reminiscently . . . It keeps a fellow hopping . . .

He paused and lit a cigarette which a dark-haired girl handed him from a shagreen cigarette-box in her lap. It sputtered for a moment, then exploded with a fearful bang, blowing out four windows. Ambrose smiled and blinked his singed eyelashes.

Fun-loving Lupe Velez, he apologized to Jack Riddell. She's always up to some coy prank like that. Only yesterday she served ground glass in all her cock-tails. She keeps us

MEANING NO OFFENSE

in a veritable whirl of merriment; we never know what's coming next . . . He leaned over and gently removed a large carpet-tack which Lupe was in the act of inserting in the seat of his chair . . . Please, dear, he chided. My operation!

A terrific shriek rent the air, and Jack Riddell started up violently. What was that? he gasped.

Ambrose bent forward languidly, and squinted into a far corner, where a dark figure was clutching her bosom and slowly sinking to the floor. Poor dear Pola, he said gently. In her passion for me she seems to have buried a dagger between her breasts. How charming of her . . . He settled back again in his chair . . . I must remember to have her stuffed.

You know, you have simply no idea how the dear gals pursue me, Ambrose continued, pointing to a vivacious creature with cerise hair, who was perched on his neck busily writing. Clara is simply wild about me, aren't you, Clara? . . . He patted her knee . . . She says the sweetest things about me in the fan

MEANING NO OFFENSE

magazines . . . He dropped his hand carelessly, and stroked the flaming head of Jacqueline Logan, who had just suggested, for the fourth time, that they go to Mexico . . . Imagine *my* embarrassment . . .

But who is *this* strange person? whispered Riddell, pointing all at once to an amazing creature with a very white face, mysterious green eyes, and coils of red hair arranged in a coronet above her head.

That is my Mama, replied Ambrose calmly. All of us here in Hollywood have Mamas, and mine really takes very good care of me. She teaches me not to be a slave to cigarettes, abjure liquor, and adopt more esoteric pleasures. Poor dear Elinor, he sighed. Clad in ermine, but seething within . . .

He leaned over suddenly and extricated a gal from the wriggling heap before him. You here again, Stella, the Star Gazer? he chided, heaving her irritably through the door. That's the fourth time she has sneaked in here, he sighed to Jack Riddell. She even follows me out at night, and writes up my house in Beverly Hills . . .

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Do you own a house in Beverly Hills? marveled Jack.

Well, not exactly, hesitated Ambrose, but I have an understanding with the real-estate people. \$1000 down and \$1000 a year for thirty-five years. I have the same understanding about my Rolls-Royce. And at nights it is filled with the Hollywood elect . . . He enumerated them vaguely from a little list in his hand . . . Loretta Young, and Sue Carol, and Camilla Horn, and Mary Duncan and Lilyan Tashman, and Mary Brian, and Zasu Pitts . . .

Ambrose, interrupted Jack Riddell suddenly, I have got to find out . . . I have got to know. What is the secret of your sudden popularity here? Why do these beautiful gals surround you? Why is all Hollywood at your feet?

My fame as an author, blustered Ambrose.

Nonsense, said Jack impatiently. One has only to read your books to know it couldn't be that.

Ambrose Deacon looked about him carefully, and lowered his voice.

Well, it's really a secret, Jack, he began.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

When I came here, you see, I knew I should have to adopt some novel plan to secure the adulation I craved. So very subtly—I think I mentioned the matter to Louella Parsons—I spread the word *that I was going to write a novel about Hollywood*. You know what these beautiful gals will do for a little publicity. The scheme worked like a charm. I awoke to find myself popular at last. And yet . . .

Aren't you satisfied? cried Jack, noting with astonishment the look of longing that had suddenly come over his friend's face.

And yet sometimes I long to be out of it all . . . Ambrose's face shone with a new light . . . Sometimes I want to return to New York, and meet Carl Van Vechten, and Carl Van Vechten, and Carl Van Vechten, Carl Van Vechten, and Carl Van Vechten, and Carl Van Vechten . . . After all, he is the only person who really appreciates me.

Jack Riddell groaned.

THE ULTIMATE GAME-BOOK

AYE, Ma'am. No publishing year in America is complete without another Game-Book to entertain the Public. First it was Cross-Word Puzzle Books, and then Laddergrams, and then Guggenheim, and then the Character-Analysis Games: Palmistry, and Twenty Questions, and Numerology, and Astrology, and Handwriting-Tests . . . Aye! Everybody analyzing everybody else, unbuttoning their inhibitions, and taking down their pride, and examining each other's manias and phobias with little suppressed giggles, like in a boarding-school. This whole nation running around in its mental unmentionables. I don't know what we're coming to, for a fact.

"Why, Ma'am, it's not safe any more to display your own handwriting in public, for fear someone will look it up in a book and discover that you wear long woolen underwear or sleep

MEANING NO OFFENSE

with your mouth open. They can even tell by the shape of your head, or the lines in your hand, or the words you think of off-hand that start with 'f,' whether or not you have a suppressed desire to marry your aunt. A feller today has no secrets.

"Character-Analysis! Answer twenty questions yes or no, sum up the total and divide through by the day of the month you were born, take your temperature, add the number of lines in the palm of your left hand, allow five points for the way you cross your t's; and as a result, Ma'am, you will find that your Total Character is zero for having given in and played the game in the first place . . .

"And if it's not Character-Analysis, it is something worse. 'What'll We Do Now?' . . . aye! One hundred helpful suggestions for making the American week-end just a little more hideous, if possible, than it was before. All the celebrities thinking up new methods of spending the evening; and not one of them stumbling on to the idea of going home and getting a little sleep. Games, games, games. With all the possibilities for Game-Books used up long since, and new ones

MEANING NO OFFENSE

still appearing every day, sometimes I wonder what they will do next?

“But you and I mustn’t be left in the lurch, Ma’am. The Ultimate Game-Book. That’s what we shall give them this time. Simply leave the next page blank; and they can use it for any game they want:—devising another cross-word puzzle, if they see fit, or testing their handwriting, or playing tit-tat-toe, or drawing little shaded diamonds and chimneys with smoke curling out. A million games here, in one book, and they can have their choice. Aye, even Simon and Schuster can never hope to beat that . . .

“In the meantime, Ma’am, you and I will go on quietly to the next chapter . . .”

DO FISHES PERSPIRE?

DO fishes perspire? A question that has been puzzling science for years, Ma'am. This time I thought I'd give them a part of my recent report to the Museum on the subject, describing my own explorations under water. Let them see for themselves what strange creatures are lying on the bottom of the sea. Including the author . . .

"Aye, that was what come of my reading William Beebe, Ma'am: Under Tropic Seas. And lost for three days, as a consequence, among the finny denizens—fish, Ma'am, begging your pardon—till I shall never feel comfortable again on a Friday. Aye, there was a harrowing experience for you! Nothing but water for three whole days . . .

"Ma'am, could I trouble you for another tot of the brandy? . . ."

IN exploring the bottom of the ocean, it has been necessary to carry on the majority of our

MEANING NO OFFENSE

work under water. Consequently I have been doing considerable diving of late, and I feel that I am progressing very favorably. For example, I can now do a jack-knife without hitting my head on the edge of the spring-board; and I am also learning the dumb-bell, a very difficult figure in which you lock your knees behind your neck, turn in midair, and land back where you started from. And if you think it is any easy matter diving in these great big heavy suits, you ought to try it yourself sometime. It is all I can do to get a running start.

Never shall I forget my first dive. Our yacht, the *Malaria*, had anchored over a particularly fascinating stretch of water, in whose limpid depths I could easily discern the strange tropic fish swimming to and fro; and my fingers fairly trembled with eagerness as I grasped the huge diving-helmet for my descent. At first I was slightly puzzled by the construction of this helmet, which is equipped with no opening of any sort save two large frames of glass through which you watch the fishes. In a helmet of this construction I did not quite see how I could



MEANING NO OFFENSE

hold my nose under water; but I solved the problem at last by cutting a hole in the metal just big enough to admit my forefinger and thumb. Thus attired, I waved good-by to the rest of the expedition, took a deep breath, and shut my eyes.

Rung by rung I descended slowly the metal ladder at the side of the boat into the icy water, until I stepped off the final rung and descended into space. After a brief trip, making very good connections all the way down, I reached the bottom of the sea at last. With what infinite relief I felt my feet touch ground! and with what eager anticipation I opened my eyes and looked about me! Alas! you can imagine my bitter disappointment when I saw only pitch blackness, unrelieved by a single wandering fish or stem of coral. In vain I strained my eyes to discover the brilliant scenes which Mr. Beebe had so often and so glowingly described. I even struck a match and held it before my face, peering desperately through the Stygian waters; but so complete was the darkness that not even the flare of the match was visible. After waiting for several

MEANING NO OFFENSE

hours, in the forlorn hope that through some possible difference in Ocean Time it might still be night down here, I signaled at last for my ascent, thoroughly disheartened by my failure.

It was not until I reached the deck that the mystery was cleared up, when one of the crew discovered that in descending I had inadvertently put my diving-helmet on backwards.

Nothing daunted by this mishap, however, I determined to try again the following day; and for this second expedition I brought along as my companion the late Dr. Wexby Messersmith, a leading authority on deep-sea fauna and flora. Inasmuch as the doctor and I decided to investigate the ocean bottom this time in thorough fashion, we brought along blanket rolls and provisions enough to last us several days, wrapped carefully in paraffin paper to keep out the dampness. I also brought along a light trout rod and tackle, including several deep-sea flies I had tied myself.

Our first day on the ocean floor was rather uneventful. We walked in and out among the fishes, just like one of them, observing the

MEANING NO OFFENSE

aquatic conditions, which we found were similar to any other conditions except that they were covered with a green slime from having been under water so long. I also amused myself by picking up and examining some of the fascinating objects which are to be found along the bottom of the ocean, including some pretty sea-shells, any number of sea-nasturtiums, or "twinks," half of a grapefruit rind, an old rubber boot, and a Harding political button. We also made a roaring fire and roasted some mussels; and right good they tasted, too.

Supper over, I decided to try a little casting, and rigged up my rod, while the doctor—who is not a very ardent angler, although he enjoys *eating* a fish as well as the next one—went in for a cold plunge. My first strike rose a beautiful example of that rare deep-sea denizen, the *Invertus Collapsus*, or sub-ocean turkey, which to my knowledge has never before been brought into captivity. As soon as this extraordinary fish swallows the hook, he immediately puts the tip of his tail in his mouth and pulls himself inside out like a glove, in which position he extracts the barb with ease. He then swims

MEANING NO OFFENSE

backward rapidly to turn himself outside in again, and flits away silently among the water-hyacinths, lightly touching his fin to his nose.

In order to land this wily creature I took out a small pocket mirror and advanced it carefully to a point within a few inches of the fish's head. Presently, glancing up, he looked at his reflection in the glass and saw for the first time how silly a fish really looks, whereupon he laughed himself to death, and the doctor and I had him next morning for breakfast.

Just as I was quitting for the night I made a last cast ahead of me and received a tremendous strike, which was hard enough to jerk me off my feet and in fact *did* jerk me off my feet, smashing my glasses. Picking myself up, I reeled in my captive feverishly, and discovered that I had inadvertently hooked into a plump mermaid, who said that her name was Arabella and that she had formerly been employed in the New York Hippodrome tank. After playing her for an hour or so with a good strong line, I finally let her go, first taking her phone number; and I walked back to camp humming happily to myself. The starfish were

MEANING NO OFFENSE

already beginning to appear, one by one, as we rolled up in the blankets, well pleased with our day's adventures.

It was on our third day that the disaster occurred which has, in a sense, put a damper on all my subsequent deep-sea explorations. During the course of our investigations, it seems, our enthusiasm had carried us into unknown territory; and when we had finally completed our investigations, broken camp, and made ready to return to the *Malaria*, we discovered to our consternation that the surface was nowhere to be seen.

Only those who have been marooned for days at the bottom of a limitless ocean can imagine our distress at this tragic predicament. We had no idea into what latitude or longitude we had strayed, and every inch of water was unfamiliar; indeed, there was not even a sunken sardine can or rusty razor blade to indicate the presence of our yacht. We were hopelessly lost.

How long we wandered about the ocean floor, alternately shouting and whistling for help, I cannot say. We were somewhat relieved,

MEANING NO OFFENSE

I admit, when I multiplied 12 by 12 and received 144 for an answer, proving that at least we were still in the northern hemisphere; but although I climbed the tallest tree and peered about me on all sides, the coveted surface was no nearer. I even built a small fire to discover which way the wind was blowing—scant satisfaction when you consider that there is no wind at the bottom of the ocean. In a general way, I deduced that the surface should lie somewhere directly above us, and I suggested to Dr. Messersmith that we start up to find it; but the doctor pointed out that if I were wrong, we might get up there and be unable to find the bottom again, and then where would we be?

It was while pondering this situation that my mind finally grasped at a last straw. Somewhere I had read that a drowned body will rise to the surface when a revolver is fired. Our provisions were exhausted; there seemed no other recourse left to us. Bidding Dr. Messersmith a fond farewell, in which I paid affectionate tribute to his extraordinary scientific ability and referred to his generosity and courage in a way that brought the tears of gratitude to his

MEANING NO OFFENSE

eyes, I regretfully drowned him. I then seized his great-toe, fired my revolver three times, and followed him rapidly to the surface, emerging at last not a stone's throw from where the *Malaria* still lay patiently at anchor.

I subsequently had my farewell tribute to Dr. Messersmith printed in pamphlet form, and distributed several copies to his grateful family.

COMPARATIVE MARRIAGE

I THOUGHT *I would tell them this time what I know about Comparative Marriage. 'Tis an improvement on the old plan of Companionate Marriage, Ma'am, as far as I know. Not being very much married myself, I can't hardly say—though in truth you don't have to be married to make theories about it. Safer not, in fact, is often the case . . . Aye.*

“Judge Lindsey created quite a bit of a furore when he first spoke of Companionate Marriage, Ma'am; but I notice the excitement has died down a bit by now. The public is fickle that way. It's like the bobbed-hair craze. Everybody trying Companionate Marriage when it was the rage, and now they're all letting their Marriages grow in again.

“Or perhaps the couples who tried it are only sitting tight till their five years are up. Then we'll hear something. Then we'll hear something. Aye . . . Boy, O boy . . .”

"OH, Judge!"

No answer.

"Oh, *Judge!*"

No answer.

"Oh, JU-HUDGE!"

A window was flung up suddenly on the second floor, and a figure in a striped nightcap poked out his head and peered sleepily through the darkness.

"What do you want?" he demanded. "What do you young people mean, waking me up this time of night?"

"Judge, we've got to see you right away," I said. "It's very important. It's about my wife here, whom, for the purposes of this story, we shall call Elsie."

"Dear, oh, dear," chided the Judge, shaking his nightcap sternly. "Haven't you two heard of Companionate Marriage?"

"That's just the trouble, Judge," I sighed. "My wife's too darned companionate. She knows everybody."

"Well, I'll get on my slippers and come right down," he said. "Maybe we can do something about it."

MEANING NO OFFENSE

A moment later the door opened and the Judge himself, his long white cotton night-gown flapping about his ankles and a flickering candle in his hand, beckoned us in. "Make yourself right at home," he apologized. "I hope you'll excuse the looks of my workroom. I held one of my marriage classes here this evening, and I'm afraid the chandeliers got a little bent." He ushered us to a chair and brushed aside some papers. "Merely some notes for a book I am writing," he added carelessly, "called *Comparative Marriage*."

"Comparative Marriage?" I echoed.

"It's an improvement on the Lindsey Companionate Marriage theory," explained the Judge. "According to this new plan, the couple agree to live together for five years, as a sort of working experiment. At the end of five years they count up the number of children they have had, and if they both reach the same total, they get married. All I need to do now is to make it legal." He adjusted his spectacles, and smiled benignly. "But what can I do for you?"

"Well, your Honour, we've tried Com-

MEANING NO OFFENSE

panionate Marriage," I replied sadly, "and I'm afraid it is a flop."

"Impossible," said the Judge.

"I fear the ship of our happiness is about to founder on the shoals of adversity which lurk in the matrimonial sea," I began, shaking my head dubiously. "For example, I am a hard-working young man, of a steady and loyal disposition, whom we shall call John. About a year ago John was married to the young daughter of a respectable middle-class family of this city, named Elsie T——. Before the union, of course, both of these modern young people discussed forthcoming matters quite frankly, and decided to live together in name only for five years, according to the suggestions in *The Companionate Marriage*. So this young couple shook hands on it, and they got their license at once.

"John got a good job, and everything went well for about two months or so, when Elsie, his wife, very suddenly had a baby. John was very busy and thought nothing of it at the time; and the whole matter would perhaps have been dropped except for the fact

that at the end of three or four months Elsie had—”

“Another baby?” suggested the Judge gravely.

“Exactly,” I said. “Naturally, John began to grow a trifle suspicious. He even mentioned the matter to Elsie, but she explained that she had no idea how it had happened, and so he dismissed the incident and went back to work. Three or four months passed, and then one day Elsie came to him and announced that she was going to have—”

“Another baby?” asked the Judge, joining his finger tips together and frowning sternly.

“Oh, Judge,” burst out Elsie. “You can’t understand what it means to a girl to be Companionately Married to a man whose work keeps him out all night. Honestly, Judge, she gets so *lonely*.”

“What is your husband’s business?” inquired the Judge.

“Oh, Judge,” sobbed Elsie, wiping her eyes. “He sells copies of the *Birth Control Review*.”

The Judge sat up very suddenly and blinked.

“You know, that reminds me of a story in

my new book," he began, bending over confidentially. "It seems there was a traveling salesman who knocked on the door of a farmhouse one night—"

"Yes, I've heard that," I said.

"Have you heard it, Elsie?" asked the Judge.

"Sure," replied Elsie, "my father was the farmer."

"Is that so?" replied the Judge, looking at her with a new interest. "I'll bet you haven't heard the one about the Scotchman and the 1876 shilling . . ." and he leaned over and whispered in her ear.

"Oh, Judge, that's a honey," laughed Elsie. "I must remember that."

"That's in my book, too," grinned the Judge shyly.

"My, it must be quite a book," said Elsie, snuggling closer.

"Whenever I hear a new one I write it down," explained the Judge, "and put it into my book. That's what makes it so popular."

"I bet a girl could be happy with you around," sighed Elsie, resting her head on his shoulder. "I bet you know an awful lot."

MEANING NO OFFENSE

"I bet I do, too," said the Judge softly.

"I'll say you do."

"I'll say."

There was a prolonged silence.

"Your Honour—" I interrupted impatiently.

"My *what?*" said the Judge, recollecting himself with a start.

"Your Honour," I repeated, "what do you advise us to do?"

"John, I think your whole problem needs to be thought out thoroughly," said the Judge solemnly. "I think we all need to weigh matters very, very carefully before we reach any conclusions. It is the tendency of youth today to act too impetuously, alas! and such a course only leads to folly and remorse."

"Yes, Your Honour," I said.

"Now, John, I want you to go home to-night, and I want you to consider this whole Companionate Marriage of yours from the beginning. I want you to face your problem squarely, and treat it like a man."

"Yes, Your Honour," I said.

"In the meantime, I shall read Elsie a few chapters from my new book, and perhaps we

MEANING NO OFFENSE

shall reach some conclusions ourselves. Remember that youth will triumph, John, and please shut the door quietly as you go out."

"Thank you, Your Honour," I said, taking my hat. "God bless you, Your Honour."

"Not at all," said the Judge.

I hesitated on the threshold.

"Good-night, Elsie," I said.

"Good-night, John," said Elsie . . .

I shut the door behind me, and walked down the silent street, whistling happily to myself.

MY TRANS-BROADWAY HOP

AYE, Ma'am. Everywhere you look today, somebody else is taking off from the front page of the New York Times on another Non-Stop Flight to a vaudeville contract, advertising testimonials, and a juicy lecture tour. Most of America up in the air these days, one way or another, what with Col. Lindbergh, and Clarence Chamberlain, and Capt. Sir Hubert Wilkins, and Messrs. Fitzmaurice and Huenefeld and Koehl, and Miss Amelia Earhart. Aye, and Commander Byrd on his way to the South Pole at last, after waiting around all summer dressed in his fur-coat, if we judge from the rotogravure sections . . .

"Every flight today an epic, Ma'am, and every hop means a new book. The personal memoirs of the flyers being published by Putnam's, one after another, faster than they can write them. Skyward by Byrd, and We by

MEANING NO OFFENSE

Lindbergh, and The Three Musketeers by the German fellers, and 20 Hours 40 Minutes by Miss Earhart . . . Conquering space? . . . Aye. Whole columns of it.

“Consequently I thought it would be interesting, Ma’am, if in this chapter I reprinted from the New York Tripe the press-clippings of my own non-stop Flight, which I made across Broadway between Fortieth and Forty-first Streets, west curb and return. A spectacular effort, Ma’am, if I do say it . . . Eh?—what good did it do?

“Really, you should learn not to ask us non-stop flyers such embarrassing questions, Ma’am, begging your pardon.”

NEW YORK, 11:10 A.M.—Comm. John Riddell, noted pioneer of air and water (mostly air) departed today from the west curb of Broadway, between Fortieth and Forty-first Streets, on his projected non-stop flight across this crowded thoroughfare. When last seen, he was squeezing his way between the rear of a taxi and the front of a Gimbel’s truck, heading in a general south-southwest direction toward the opposite curb.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

NEW YORK, 11:45 A.M.—A taxi driver, turning off Broadway at Columbus Circle, reports having seen Comm. Riddell heading north through the traffic on Broadway, between Forty-third and Forty-fourth Streets. He says Comm. Riddell was dazed but still confident. His hat was missing.

BY JOHN RIDDELI

(Copyright, 1928, by the New York Tripe, the St. Louis Globe-Dispatch, the St. Louis Post-Democrat, the St. Louis Herald-World, the Miami Globe, the Kansas City Moon, the Pornographic, a couple of papers in Spanish, the Staten Island Courier, the Yale Alumni News, Women's Wear, Harper's Young People (discontinued), Puck, and the New York Telephone Directory.

All rights reserved except the Scandinavian. Comm. Riddell doesn't speak Scandinavian.)

(By Radio direct to the New York Tripe, picked up in the center of Broadway

MEANING NO OFFENSE

floating in an old gin bottle, about half full.)

SOMEWHERE ON BROADWAY, NEW YORK, 11:40 A.M.—My present attempt to hop across Broadway is the result of a long-cherished ambition to discover a shorter method of crossing from one side of the street to the other than the customary route by way of the Dyckman Street ferry to the Jersey side, up the west coast of the Hudson, back across the Bear Mountain bridge and down through White Plains and the Bronx Parkway. As a result of my investigations so far, however (I am still in the middle of the street), I am convinced that any shorter route is utterly impractical and visionary.

I am taking along only the necessary instruments to make my observations en route, including the invaluable Bumstead Sun-Compass, a useful instrument which is similar in appearance to a cocktail shaker, except that it is lined with fur. There is no apparent reason I can see why it should be lined with fur, except that otherwise it would *be* a cocktail

shaker; and it would certainly be silly to take along a cocktail shaker. On Broadway, anyway.

Armed with this instrument, and the Byrd Bubble Sextant (one of the most beautiful sextants I have ever listened to, and superior, in my mind, to the sextant from "Lucia") I plan to make my observations over this unexplored area. My only observations to date have been that life is a pretty funny proposition, and that there is a button missing from my trousers. I might also observe that the traffic is getting pretty darned thick.

My departure from the west curb was inconspicuous. The traffic halted in front of me; and picking a narrow opening between a taxi and a Gimbel's truck, I quit the curb at 11:10 A.M. (11:17 A.M. by my watch) and wedged my way between the radiator and rear bumper, smearing a little grease down the left leg of my trousers. The end of this passageway brought me face to face with a large limousine, so I turned south and walked three or four car-lengths down Broadway until another opening presented itself. After clambering through this

MEANING NO OFFENSE

narrow space and ripping the lining of my coat on a projecting fender, I discovered that my path was blocked by another truck (Macy's), so nothing remained but for me to get down and crawl under it. This was how I lost my hat.

By this time, to be frank, I was growing a little concerned, since it was already 11:25 and I was no longer sure in which direction the opposite curb lay. As I continued to thread my way back and forth between the cars, exploring each little lane and alley, the horrid conviction slowly grew upon me that I was merely going around in circles. This conviction was strengthened by the fact that pretty soon the motorists and taxi drivers began to nod to me familiarly as I approached, and call me by name.

Despite my predicament, I have not neglected to make careful charts of the topography of the region where I am. The rock formation of this part of Broadway is in general of a hard and grayish material, and contains a curious diking of some black, oozing substance which frequently protrudes above the surface and sticks to your feet. In addition,

MEANING NO OFFENSE

I came upon two rich veins of iron or other metal running parallel through the center of the street. The general contour hereabouts is quite uneven, and is practically devoid of vegetation. I have picked up a few interesting deposits, however, including several pieces of tin foil, a Lincoln penny, part of last night's *Graphic* and some chewing gum on the bottom of my shoe.

To add to my difficulties, the traffic lights have just shifted, necessitating my clambering up on to the running-board of a taxi to avoid being crushed. In this unceremonious way I am being carried helplessly northward, up Broadway, into a brand-new traffic jam, which I shall have to explore all over again as soon as I stop.

BY JOHN RIDDELL

(*Special Cable to the New York Tripe, written out in Comm. Riddell's characteristic longhand, and delivered by a native Eskimo in a red cap, named George.*)

SOMEWHERE ON BROADWAY, 12:15 P.M.—The taxi upon which I have been riding has just

MEANING NO OFFENSE

halted again; and upon dismounting from the running-board I have been astonished to find myself face-to-face with another pedestrian, curled up on the front bumper of a trolley car.

He introduced himself to me as Edgar Mellish, and claims to have been riding up and down on the front of that trolley since the day before yesterday. If the story he tells is true, my own experiences seem pygmy in comparison.

Although his narrative was slightly incoherent, Mr. Mellish declares that for two days, since he was caught in a blind pocket halfway across the street, he has lived a more or less hand-to-mouth existence, sleeping at nights in a Chinatown bus.

"Look out for blind pockets," he warned me, "they're perfect hell."

Unfortunately, the lights changed again at this point, and I was forced to board the running-board of a south-bound taxi, leaving Mr. Mellish still clanging north on his trolley car. In parting he asked me to give his love to his wife, and tell her he'd be home as soon as he could cross the street.

MEANING NO OFFENSE

BY JOHN RIDDELL

*(Special Wireless to the New York Tripe,
written here in the office before he left.)*

SOMEWHERE ON BROADWAY, 12:18 P.M.—I have just passed the Times Building, and my taxi is edging steadily toward the curb. If I come near enough, I think I shall make the jump . . .

NEW YORK, 12:19 P.M.—Comm. John Riddell just completed his Trans-Broadway hop, landing back here on the west curb thirty-two seconds ago. The intrepid explorer alighted on the sidewalk on his head, not three feet from the spot where he stepped off one hour and nine minutes ago in his bold attempt to cross the street afoot. He was surrounded at once by a crowd of excited bystanders.

As soon as he regains consciousness, he is expected to make an interesting statement.

DEAD NOVELISTS ARE GOOD NOVELISTS

AYE, Ma'am. And now, for the final chapter. *I thought I should let them in at last on an unknown and hitherto unsuspected secret in the private love-life of John Riddell. Did you know I'd been loved by a lady-novelist, Ma'am? Long ago it was, and intense while it lasted, but as Miss Frances Newman said, "Dead lovers are faithful lovers." So all ended happily for me.*

"'He would never love her as much as she loved herself.' There is the whole story, Ma'am—though in Dead Lovers are Faithful Lovers Miss Newman took 295 pages to get it said. My lady-novelist had no such endurance: hers was an all-consuming passion, and I fear my own indifference did but hasten the tragical conclusion. Aye, well, we must all learn to bear up under adversity. Perhaps a tragedy for her was a joy for all the rest of us. . . .

"Meaning no offense, Ma'am."

MEANING NO OFFENSE

WHEN the little male cuckoo that was only a wooden cuckoo hopped out of a tiny mahogany door to cry his name three times in six beautifully separate syllables, Isabel Evelyn slipped off the long black-clocked sheer silk stocking from her beautifully tended right foot. And when she slipped off the long black-clocked sheer silk stocking from her beautifully tended left foot, the little wooden cuckoo did not hop out of his tiny mahogany door to cry his name in two more beautifully separate syllables, because it was only three o'clock and a fourth "Cuck-oo" right then would have sounded silly. But when she stood up and slipped off from her beautifully rounded shoulders the beautifully embroidered white chemise which her mother had bought her for \$2.98 in Gimbel's basement, the little male cuckoo *did* open the tiny mahogany door and hop out again just for a moment, on the pretext that he had forgotten his rubbers, because he was only a wooden cuckoo but, after all, he had the instincts.

When she had laid the beautifully embroidered white chemise across the bottom of a

MEANING NO OFFENSE

bed that was a bookcase in the daytime, she walked across the yellow hooked rug which her father's great-grandmother had hooked from a furniture store in Fall River in 1843, toward the little mahogany dressing-table that was not a mahogany table if you scratched the surface too hard with a pin. And she looked into the experienced and slightly jaded mirror at the dark henna hair and blonde lashes and delicately lifted cheeks and carefully modeled nose and carefully remodeled chin which she had assembled into a fairly satisfactory reflection after eight years' hard work.

Then she walked across the yellow hooked rug into her bathroom, and she looked into the full-length mirror, which had been presented to her by the son of two Chicago packers because it was the precise reflection of her beautifully tended figure, at the familiar arrangement of hair and eyes and nose and lips which could be called a face if you were being general enough. And then she looked down at the delicately curved throat and the voluptuous arms and the two round firm white objects which reminded her of two round firm white

MEANING NO OFFENSE

pint-bottles of cream which the Borden's man left on her doorstep every morning, but which of course were really only her two fists clenched tightly before her, because a heavy golden shell of pain had just burst in the center of her body for fear that John Riddell did not love her.

And then she walked across the yellow hooked rug into her library, and she looked into the full-length novel which was the precise reflection of her beautifully tended mind. And she looked at the beautifully tended prose of the novel, and the familiar arrangement of verbs and nouns and adjectives and adverbs which could be called a style if you were being general enough. And then she looked down at the delicately curved allusions and the voluptuous paragraphs and the straight description which went to the middle of her novel, and the green pattern of delicately confused metaphors and the plot that became two strangely divided parts that did not seem to have any relation to each other. And she thought of the moment when she had first wanted to see John Riddell's sleeping face turned toward her prose, and when this strange desire had united with

her familiar style and when it had become her novel.

When she placed her beautifully tended right foot into the bath which was just too cool for the twenty-first day of October, she was thinking of the two forked veins which would weave their delicately green lines up John Riddell's sunburned forehead when he first lifted her purple jacket and looked beneath it at her novel. And when she placed her beautifully tended left foot into the bath that was just too warm for the nineteenth day of October, she was wondering if she would hear him pronounce it perfect in two beautifully separate syllables, or whether she would hear him pronounce it less than perfect in one. But when she lay upon her back in the bath that was precisely right for the twentieth day of October, and the surface of the water covered all of her beautifully tended body except the two round firm white objects that were her knees, she was wondering if she could ever make him love her as much as she loved herself.

Fifteen minutes after she had stepped into

the bath, into which she had dipped herself as carefully as one of the South Carolina Pages had never dipped a slice of bread and butter into his coffee, Isabel Evelyn looked into the full-length mirror at the body which she was drying delicately with two cotton towels for which her father had sacrificed a cotton night-shirt that had come from Bloomingdale's in 1896. And she looked away from the full-length mirror to look into the full-length novel at the beautifully tended prose which she would lay in the waiting arms of John Riddell when the large hand pointed to twelve and the small hand pointed to four on the clock of the Graybar Building on the west side of Lexington Avenue between Forty-third Street and Forty-fourth Street.

When she had carefully and quickly curled very long brown sentences into a careful reproduction of the smooth sentences on which John Riddell would open his eyes, and when she had very quickly and carefully covered every inch of her prose with a delicately pink and a delicately lilac feminine lure, she began to open jars of white cream marked "French

MEANING NO OFFENSE

phrases" and jars of pale crimson marked "exotic phrases" and jars of a slightly deeper crimson marked "biological and pathological phrases" as she might have lighted white candles before her photograph, and she poured out her pale crimson phrases as she might have poured out holy water.

But before she opened the door that led into the street where she would find the 110th Street subway station, she stopped to open a little six-cornered glass bottle with a square purple label marked, "French Love Drops, the perfume of ecstasy, just a tiny drop is enough," which she had purchased for \$.98 postpaid from the Wons Company, Box 367, Hollywood, Cal., and to lay the point of the long glass stopper on her words and on her sentences, and to slip it along the paragraphs that were beginning to quiver with a caressing pain, and then to slip it down every inch of the beautifully tended novel that she was going to lay in John Riddell's waiting arms.

When she had not reached into her pocket because there was no pocket in the chemise she

MEANING NO OFFENSE

was not wearing, and when she had dropped into the subway turnstile a single round piece of silver for which the government of the United States of America stood ready to offer her five cents at the instant's notice, Isabel Evelyn looked at her delicately pink and delicately lilac and delicately naked body in the small mirror of a subway slot-machine. And when she entered the crowded subway car that was to carry her to John Riddell, a heavy golden shell of pain burst in the very center of her body and she lifted her hands to grasp two round firm white subway straps swinging overhead. But when the first jerk of the swaying car sent her off her beautifully tended right foot into the lap of the man in front of her, and the next jerk of the swaying car sent her off her beautifully tended left foot into the lap of the man behind her, she began to wonder whether she would have time to sit in all the laps of all the men in the car before she got to Times Square, or whether she would have to ride as far as Pennsylvania Station, and walk back.

She looked again at her beautifully tended

body in the reflection on the polished floor of Grand Central Terminal, and a heavy golden shell burst within her as she felt more eyes on every inch of her novel at the present moment than had ever been on a single inch of her before. She felt that the whole city of New York was pressing toward her, and examining her delicately pink and delicately lilac prose and reaching for her voluptuous words and feeling her naked paragraphs and pushing and jostling and trampling each other in their eagerness as they followed her across Grand Central Terminal and into the elevator and up to the nineteenth floor of the Graybar Building. But when she looked around eagerly, there was nobody in the car but the elevator boy, and he was asleep.

The large hand of the clock was pointing to twelve and the small hand was pointing to a sign marked "Out of Order" as she walked through the empty offices of *Vanity Fair* toward the office in which she would find John Riddell. But when she had entered this office, and looked under his desk, and in his wastebasket and behind the water-cooler and

MEANING NO OFFENSE

through the Outgoing Mail and in the Men's Room and among the back files and over the transom and beneath the small card marked, "Gone for the day, J. R.," the conviction began to grow upon her that he was not there. And a heavy golden shell burst within her as she realized that she never would be any nearer to him than she was now, if he could help it, and that he never could love her as much as she loved herself.

When she was passing the window of the thirteenth floor of the Graybar Building, Isabel Evelyn was wondering whether it might not have been really more fitting for Posterity if she had decided to go back home, after all, and climb into the bathtub and let the beautifully tended body that was not to be her body after she had passed twelve more stories sink slowly to oblivion beneath the water which would have been only slightly scented with heliotrope bath salts that she could have bought for \$1.49 at the second counter on the right in the rear of Saks' Fifth Avenue. And when she was passing the window of the eighth

MEANING NO OFFENSE

floor, upside down, a position which she had modestly assumed by this time in her descent, she was wondering if, when they had laid her in a long box which was not the long box in which Gimbel's had delivered the beautifully embroidered white chemise that she was not wearing, John Riddell, bearing a single phallic lily in his hand, would reverently place upon her crossed hands a \$15.00 wreath of laurel and of bay from a Fifth Avenue florist, with a Tiffany engraved card marked "Now She Belongs to the Ages." But when she was passing the window of the third floor, she was wondering whether, after she had passed the first floor, there would be anything of her left to the Ages, except possibly a slight stain on the west side of Lexington Avenue between Forty-third Street and Forty-fourth Street.

A NOTE ON THE TYPE IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

THE *type in which this book is set is known as McAnkle, or "Mac," and is a modern rendering of the type discovered by Giovanni McAnkle (1740-1629), a celebrated Italian type-discoverer of the period. McAnkle stumbled upon this type quite accidentally while washing out the bottom of a stream in Italy, preparatory to taking a bath; but he threw it back into the stream again in a pet when he learned that the letters did not spell anything. The principal difference between the Italian McAnkle and the modern version is the rounding "S" and a slight accenting of the downward stroke, which is accomplished by kicking out the legs as in the Australian crawl. In addition, the modern version is in English.*

SET UP, KNOCKED DOWN, SET UP AGAIN AND ELECTRO-
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